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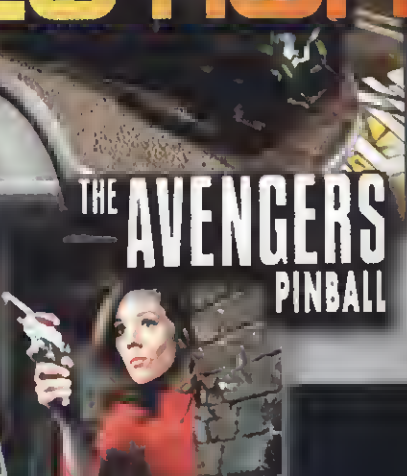
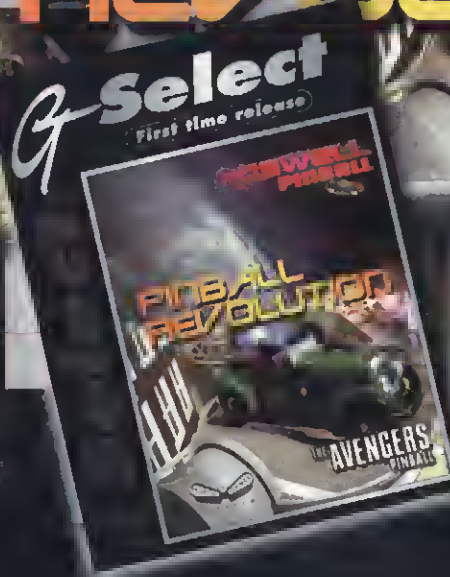
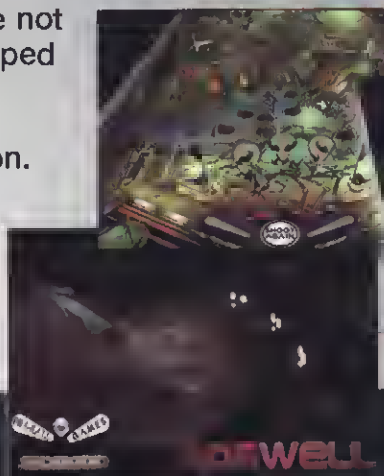
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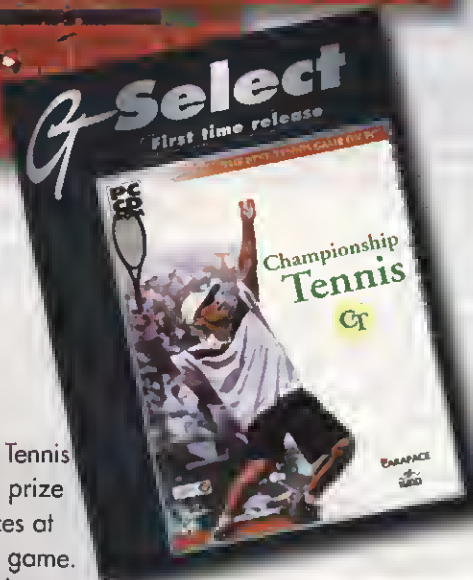
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**102** SUPERTEST Fantasy action names get a grilling.

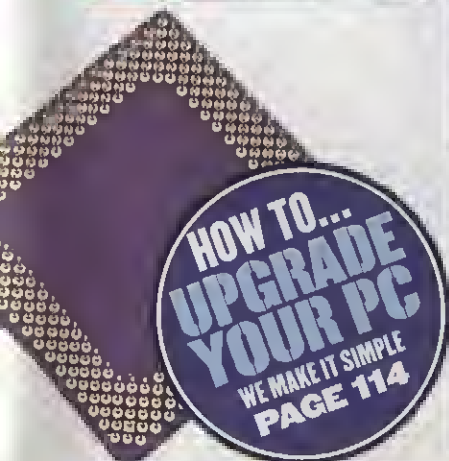
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SPECIAL READERS' OFFER  
PAGE 29



**74** STAR WARS: EPISODE I - THE PHANTOM MENACE With the film about to be unleashed upon the British public, we ask whether the game of the film is any good.



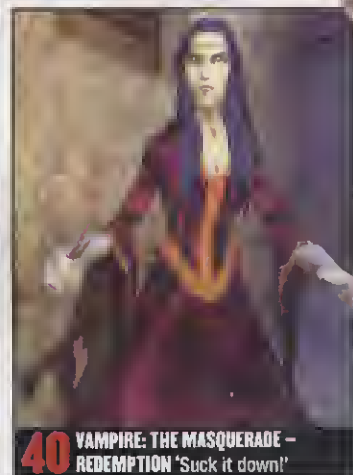
**80** DISCWORLD NOIR Adventure games aren't dead, just very dark.



HOW TO...  
**UPGRADE**  
**YOUR PC**  
WE MAKE IT SIMPLE  
PAGE 114

**UK PC GAMES**  
**CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
**1999**

**32** UK GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS Joysticks at the ready, no jumping the gun, on your marks... get set... GO!



**40** VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION 'Suck it down!'

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The most definitive reviews section around. All the latest and greatest PC games (and, of course, some of the worst) come under the cynical *PC ZONE* microscope. This is the place to come before shelling out on that new game you've got your eye on

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“Horny’s back with a vengeance! And the animation rocks great big polygonal bells throughout”

**68** **DUNGEON KEEPER II:** Horny looks pleased with himself. Maybe it’s because of the glowing review or maybe it’s the servicing he’s getting from a goblin that had to be cut out of the picture. You decide.

**WIN THE TOP 10 PC GAMES**  
SEE THE PC ZONE CHARTS  
**PAGE 25**

## ON THE CD

**FULL DETAILS PAGE 132**

That silvery thing on the cover is loaded with great demos, patches and helpful files guaranteed to ensure you get more out of your PC

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Patches for Brian Lara Cricket, Half-Life, SiN, Unreal and lots more  
Lots of useful games utilities and...  
oh, just go to page 132 and see

## BULLETIN

Quite literally the most definitive games news section in the universe

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We ask leading developers their views on the games industry. This month: Lionhead's Peter Molyneux and Steve Jackson

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The last ever, sorry



➔ \$2000 for a dog? Find out more in Tech Head, page 30.

**WIN!** **THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS** Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (79), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7JL.** The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The Ed's decision is final. Closing date Thursday 15 July. The winner of our July (178) cover compo was Ian Farley of Brighton, who wins something from the *ZONE* prizes cupboard for correctly answering last month's little teaser.



# All the latest PC software...

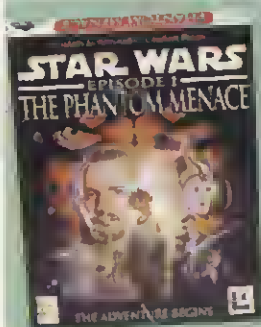
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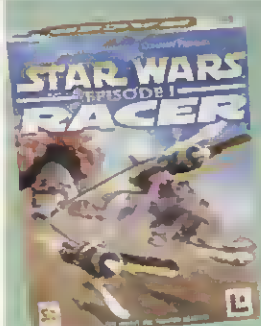
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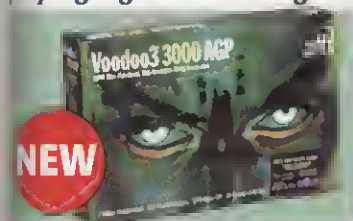
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## IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE GAME

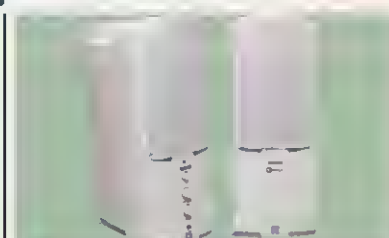
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# NO MORE HEROES?

**W**hile pondering life's complexities the other day, my thoughts drifted on to the subject of originality in videogames, particularly on the PC. Industry journalists are forever bemoaning the lack of genuinely innovative games, and cursing developers for showering us with sequels and rip-offs of existing classics, plus of course the dreaded retro revamps that seem to be popping up everywhere these days. That is, until recently.

It's difficult to pinpoint exactly when things started to go wrong, but somehow resigned acceptance of shameless clones seems to have become the norm in the PC games industry, and the 'disease' has managed to infect even the most hardened games hacks too, including some of the ones working for this very magazine (*Gasp - a reader*).

Let me give you a few examples. Steve Hill's review of *Descent 3* this issue (see page 90) cites the game as being a very obvious rip-off of *Forsaken*, which in turn was a very obvious rip-off of *Descent 2*. Phil Wand admitted in his *TA Kingdoms* review that the game was innovative in terms of design, but not particularly original. Both *Descent 3* and *TA Kingdoms* (PCZ #78, 94%) received very respectable scores in *PC ZONE*.

But how can we rate these games so highly when they spit in the face of originality? The answer is simple: there are no truly original new titles out there to give these 'classic re-workings' a run for their money. Look at the charts over the last six months, and you'll notice that all the games that reached the Number One spot were either sequels, or games that emulated a title which has already proved itself in the market.

Depressed? Don't be. This year's E3 proved that there are ground-breaking titles on the way in almost every genre. *Ultima Ascension*, *System Shock 2* (this could be the most atmospheric game of all time), *Vampire*, *Black & White*, and many other titles are lining up to set new benchmarks in their chosen genres and give the industry a much-needed breath of fresh air. In stark contrast to last year, when the words 'new game' and 'sequel' were synonymously linked, 1999 looks set to be the year that the industry goes back to its roots. And many of these titles will be exclusive to *PC ZONE*, so you'll be the first to read about and play exclusive demos of all these games.

On that happy bombshell, enjoy the issue. I look forward to seeing you again next month.

Chris Anderson, Editor

## MEET THE ZONE TEAM

All *PC ZONE*'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a reviewer who's a fan of the genre



CHRIS ANDERSON

**If you had a dungeon, who would you throw in it?**

The entire Arsenal team. They cost me £100 when they finished higher in the league than Chelsea last season.



PAUL MALLINSON

Trisha, for being such a bloody awful chat show host, and that lat bitch Vanessa Feltz. They can both rot in a cell for life, for all I care.



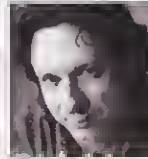
RINNIE SNODEMAKER

Eight willing young 'supervivens' and a frozen chicken.



MARK HILL

Pinocchet, Milosevic, fox hunters, bullfighters, TV programmers, terrorists, bigots... most of the world's population, really.



STEVE HILL

Paul Mallinson, because he'd probably enjoy it.



CHARLIE BROOKER

Hale and Pace, as an atonement for inflicting their programme on the world.

**If you were a vampire, whose blood would you suck?**

Vanessa Feltz, so she would slowly bleed to death. No hang on, that sounds disgusting. Forget that.

Ooh, kinky. If I had to go for anyone I would probably choose my girlfriend, so that we could go out sucking blood together.

I wouldn't mind a nibble on Andrea Corr, but my girlfriend would drive a stake through my heart.

I'm a vegetarian, so it would have to be Drew Barrymore's or Alicia Silverstone's (they're also veggies).

Don't be disgusting.

Brian Sewell (*Art critic - Culture Ed.*)



PAUL PRESLEY

**If you had a dungeon, who would you throw in it?**

What is this, the bloody Inquisition? I thought we lived in a civilised society.



KEITH PULLIN

The entire Man Utd football team. They'd probably escape though - just.



ADAM PHILLIPS

John Prescott. Drivers unite!



DAVID MCCANDLESS

God and Jesus and all the disciples.



WARREN CHRISMAS

Er... myself - it you promised to supply loads of scantily clad women with whips and stuff. When do we start?



PHIL WAND

Fat people who don't wear shirts in public.

**If you were a vampire, whose blood would you suck?**

No one, frankly. Give me a nice beaujolais any day.

Nora Batty from *Last Of The Summer Wine*. Have you seen those veins?! Mmmmm (*Bloody Nora - Ed.*)

Sarah Michelle Gellar. I'd show her some moves.

Mine - very high quality.

Carrie's.

Anyone diabetic.

PCZONE

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WIN! Who directed the new Star Wars movie? Send entries on the back of a postcard to: I've read the small print, PC ZONE (79), 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ by Thursday 15 July. Winner and prize announced same place next issue. Nadine Parr from Exeter wins the ZONE grab bag of goodies from last month's compo for correctly answering that the full name of E3 is Electronic Entertainment Exposition. Well done, Nadine.

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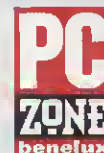
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Don't miss it



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# MAILBOX



**The PC should behave more like a console (of course it shouldn't); an argument for network gaming as the ideal multiplayer set-up; and one man loses his PC to his better half and blames us**

★ ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

## CONTACT INFO

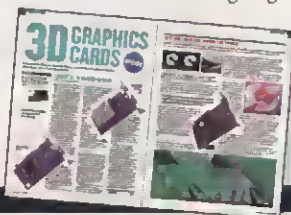
If your letter is selected as Letter of the Month we'll send you some promotional goodies, a game and maybe even some hardware!

**WRITE TO** Mailbox, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

**EMAIL** letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

**CHAT FORUM** If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at [www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk) for further info.

☛ You want reports on graphics cards? Who didn't buy our previous issue, then?



## TECH THOUGHTS

Fantastic mag. Love it. I've even caught my wife reading it! But I'd like to make a suggestion to make it even better. You show games at the leading edge of technology and progress, but to play these games, you need to have the right kit. And with the hardware progressing just so damn quick, it's hard to keep up. So what I'd really love to see in every issue or two is a review of the latest cutting-edge hardware

(especially graphics cards, sound cards etc) and relate it in terms of how

good they are for games - after all that's what we really want them for! I'm just in the process of trying to buy a new graphics card but there are so

**"The language used in ZONE does not offend me, indeed I am encouraged by it. It authenticates the reviews of the games"**

NEIL FRASER ADDS HIS TEN PENCE WORTH TO THE SWEARING DEBATE

many new ones that I don't know what to go for - and the reviews are few and far between. Please don't ignore this request. I know I'm not the only one in this boat. Yours in need of professional assistance.

Mark Wilbraham

☛ Check out our upgrade feature this issue (page 114) for general tips on how to fine-tune your PC for optimum performance. 3D

**"What does a console have that a PC doesn't? Why should it not be possible to turn on your PC, place in a CD and go?"**

MIKE DOMMETT FLIES THE PC FLAG

Thursday 29 July) for a review of the new batch of cards set to compete with the Voodoo3 from 3Dfx (reviewed last issue).

## NO OFFENCE

I am a law student, but the prose style of ZONE appeals to me. Before the mag was 'toned down' in this respect, when reading reviews of games, I felt that I was down the pub having the game described to me by a mate. It felt normal, I could identify with the language used in context. This ties in with FHM - it treats me like an adult and provides me with adult information. The language used in ZONE does not offend me, indeed I am encouraged by it. It authenticates the reviews of the games in the mag, adds reality to them.

In addition, I buy ZONE because I know the reviewers, having read their reviews for a number of years. This does not mean that I automatically agree with them, it just means that I have an appreciation of their opinion in its context. If Mr C Brooker dislikes a game that is in a genre that he generally has not reviewed favourably, and if I have enjoyed the previous games he's slated, that scathing review means more to me than some simpering, bribe-ridden filth in another mag. Knowing the reviewers and columnists is a vital part of knowing which mag to buy.

Neil Fraser

I objected to Peter Lacey's facile demonisation of people who swear, and his pompous assumption that if you didn't print his comments, his case was proved. If he wants to cry and throw his toys out of the pram, let him, but why inflict his puerile rantings onto us? Please, for God's sake, leave tripe like that putrefying in the wastepaper basket where

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

**GOODIES WINNER!**

### DREAM PC?

People have long been going on about how games consoles will always have the edge over PCs when it comes to the mass market for games, because they are easier to use and they don't suffer from operating system problems. But what does the console have that the PC doesn't? Why should it not be possible to turn on your PC, place in a CD and go? After all, the consoles have an OS kernel, processor, memory, 3D accelerator etc, but this is all hidden from the user. Another problem with PCs is that multi-tasking operating systems (eg Windows) are shite for games platforms - there are so many background processes going on it's no wonder that the games that came with both DOS and Windows versions a couple of years ago ran faster in DOS. As per a recent letter, who wants Find Fast checking your hard drive in the middle of a game?

To be fair to Windows, however, it has addressed the main curse of PC gamers - drivers. No longer do games manufacturers have to support 20 different video cards - this is dealt with by Windows - but why couldn't this feature be incorporated into an ultra-

light, super-fast OS kernel that automatically runs instead of your main OS when a games CD is detected? This would be a big step for PC gaming, the downside being that all the developers would have to agree on yet another standard API for each type of hardware (OpenGL for 3D graphics, for example), and each hardware manufacturer would be required to provide drivers for their product compliant to this standard. This is, of course, happening at the moment with DirectX, but ideally such a standard should not be dictated by a company so huge that people can't argue, it should be decided on by a collaboration of competing clever blokes.

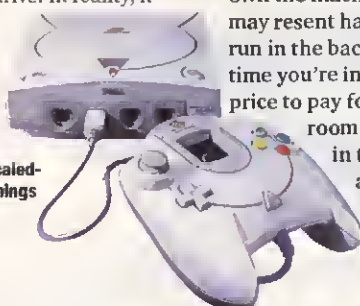
What I'm saying is that there is no reason why you couldn't have your PC for doing all your 'other' stuff that requires a comprehensive operating system, and yet have it behave like a console as soon as you boot up with a games CD in the drive. In reality, it would take someone like Microsoft or Linux to start the ball rolling by

☛ Is Dreamcast's scaled-down OS a sign of things to come for the PC?

creating a compact OS kernel dedicated to gaming, but if this were to happen gamers would benefit from increased ease of use and performance. Maybe it would also encourage games developers to stop relying on patches - which are an idea born out of the fact that PCs are so flexible.

Mike Dommert

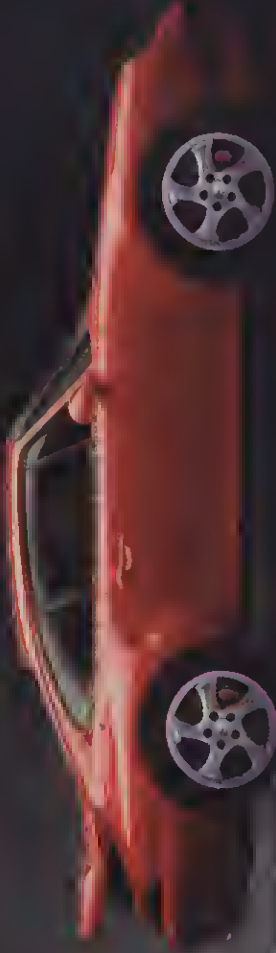
☛ While it would make sense in theory for the PC to have an alternate OS dedicated to gaming (Windows Lite?), you would probably find that each developer has their own ideas as to which APIs they want to use for their games, so the OS would have to be flexible enough to cater for them all, which in turn would bring you back to square one. This is not a bad thing. The Dreamcast has a set-up similar to the one you describe, but Dreamcast owners will be stuck with that set-up for as long as they own the machine. So although you may resent having apps and drivers run in the background the whole time you're in Windows it's a small price to pay for the flexibility and room for expansion both in terms of hardware and software your machine offers.



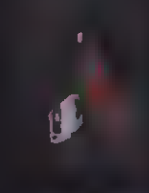
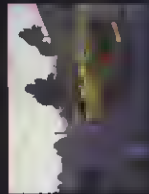


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ELECTRONIC ARTS



# CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON



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MOUTH IS

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ROAD CHALLENGE



it belongs. A reasoned debate on swearing in *PC ZONE* might be valid (though not in my opinion), but not rapid gruntings of this ilk.

Robin Evans

★ You will still find the occasional, er, 'street term' popping up throughout the mag, because our reviewers sometimes resort to alternative methods of getting their point across (this will continue until we teach them how to write), but in general we have

that's why I think people should play more network games.

Networking is much more simple than most people think and can be carried out in your home. Here are five things you need: 1) A computer with a network card (about £15-25 including cable); 2) Computer-owning friends; 3) Enough cables and tables for computers; 4) Decent multiplayer games; 5) Junk food/air freshener. I originally started at home

bill if you're not connected to the Internet, but it's just not a practical option for most gamers. And don't discount Internet gaming completely, you're missing out on the opportunity to play games against thousands of people from all over the world.

## A WARNING

I hope you fired Mr McCandless for his feature on how to get girlfriends into games. Here are six reasons not to get your girlfriend into gaming:

1. Christmas won't be cheaper - my girlfriend wants a PC that's better than the one I have, and a Voodoo3 because she reads the magazine.
2. "You'll have something to talk about." No, you'll have something to argue about. She's always telling me that *Quake II* is mindless violence and there's no point to it. So I should turn it off and watch her instead.
3. Her hand-eye co-ordination will certainly improve when I ask her to open her purse for the money to buy the latest title - she will have played the demo and decided it's not worth the money.
4. A PC in the living room. Do you want her telling your mates about all the levels she can complete but that you can't? When the footie's on?
5. If you don't buy her a computer she's gonna hog

Chris Steele-Davies,  
Bridgewater

★ Not many people have the room (or inclination) to set up a local area network in their home. Yes, you're right - it's a great way to play games against your mates, and you don't have to worry about your phone

yours for hours and hours on end.  
6. So you couldn't think of a sixth? Well, after buying her a PC she's gonna need something to sit on, and a desk. You can kiss goodbye to half the space in your room that you've spent months and months getting just right, and you can say cheerio to your favourite chair that's taken hours and hours of sitting in to get comfortable. Because it now belongs to her.

Oh well, I'll send then delete this message now, cos she knows how to read my emails too.

PS: Don't let them play *Rollercoaster Tycoon*.

Mr A McAllister

★ Just goes to prove the grass isn't always greener on the other side. Probably.

## OBSESSED?

I have just been left faintly bemused by your article 'Obsessed With Upgrading' in issue 77. Perusing through this item and reading

Is this man  
obsessed?



comments like

"Take a look at Chris's tech spec for his latest baby - it'll make you feel inadequate" and "Jealous? you will be", I was looking forward to looking at a real turbo-nutter PC that I would aspire to build myself with all the latest hardware gizmos and totally future-proof for at least, er, two months.

Instead, I was incredibly un-gobsmacked by the revelation that he has a dual PII 350 set-up (hope he uses Windows NT, as Win95/98 doesn't support dual processors), three CD-ROM drives (okay, one's a writer but not even a re-writer, and no DVD-ROM with decoder), WinNT card (!), an AWE64 ISA sound card (what, no SBlive PCI?), and no mention of a 3D card!

What, this is a machine I should be impressed by, is it? I dread to think of the machines you guys use in the office! Seriously though, I think the above comments were slightly misplaced in reflection to the finished article. Surely a true obsessed with upgrading freak would be on a Pentium III by now, with a Voodoo3 AGP card and all the trimmings? The magazine on the whole is a great read though.

Terry Watson

★ I think you may have missed the point slightly. The point of the article was to demonstrate Chris's obsession with all things technical. He may not have the very best equipment available, but it doesn't stop him constantly tinkering with and upgrading his machine to the best of his ability. [2]

Doom I and II were the first games to bring true multiplayer gaming to the masses.





# Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX

## GOLD PACK



• Now available as a limited edition Gold Pack, including the Original Rainbow Six and Rainbow Six Eagle Watch Mission Pack.

• From the best selling author Tom Clancy comes the most revolutionary action/strategy game of its kind.

• Nothing comes close to offering such an exciting combination of strategy, team building, realistic three dimensional graphics and true to life special forces action.

*"If there could be a game which would train you up for the real thing, this would be it! Exciting and challenging in equal amounts..."*

92% Ultimate PC

*"A truly tremendous game that is so rewarding to play"*

83% PC Home

*"You'll find Rainbow Six to be an absorbing, intelligent and hard-as-nails experience"*

85% PC Gamer — Game of Distinction

# LIMITED EDITION



# GOLD PACK



TOP STORY



"Get your stinkin' paws off me, you damn dirty ape!"

# FORGET STAR WARS, BRING ON PLANET OF THE APES

## ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**DEVELOPER** Visiware Studios

**PUBLISHER** Fox Interactive

**EXPECTED RELEASE DATE** Spring 2000

## IN SUMMARY

Based on one of the most recognisable franchises in movie history, it will coincide neatly with the remake of the original film.

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

*Planet Of The Apes* is a masterpiece of cinema. Like the film, the game will feature talking monkeys.

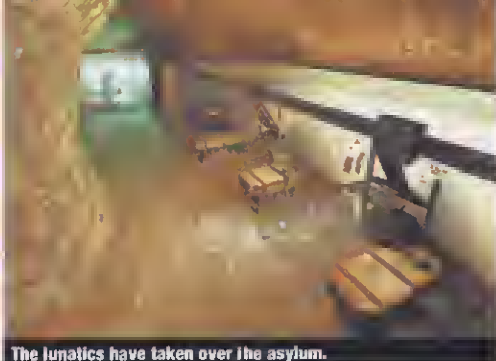
## POTENTIAL PITFALLS

It'll struggle to live up to the film. Also, the vast majority of film licences have thus far been unmitigated rubbish.

Prepare for monkey magic, courtesy of Fox

★ KING OF THE SWINGERS Steve Hill





The lunatics have taken over the asylum.



What kind of gruesome experiments take place in here?



"Doctor, I tell you the idea of humans being capable of producing a computer game is simply quite preposterous."



And God created ape...



Third-person action is the order of the day in the game they're all calling Planet Of The Apes.

**Y**es, over 30 years after the original *Planet Of The Apes* film was released, it's now to form the basis of a virtual reality videogame, a notion as outlandish as the plot of the film back when Charlton Heston first barked the immortal words: "You maniacs! You blew it up! Damn you... God damn you all to hell!"

Heston was not a happy man, pounding the beach in despair as the credits rolled, the final apocalyptic scene bringing a majestic film to a close. Based on Pierre Boulle's ground-breaking novel, *Planet Of The Apes* is essentially science fiction as political-sociological allegory, incorporating chilling satire and, most importantly, talking monkeys.

Although Heston baled out half an hour into the sequel, the series spanned five instalments of varying quality – all starring Roddy McDowall – as well as spawning a TV show

(cancelled after 14 episodes due to lack of interest) and even a cartoon.

All of which takes us up to 1975. Waiting a quarter of a century to release a game may therefore seem a bit of an odd move. However, a quick look at who the publisher is offers a clue, as this is the same Fox as the

humans have been relegated to the lower branches of the evolutionary tree. From a third-person perspective, the story unravels over 15 huge levels, incorporating intelligent puzzles, and skirmishes with a variety of foes including giant bats, mutated rats and rabid hyenas.

the game will also introduce two new simian castes, the promisingly named renegade baboons and mandrill assassins.

The game isn't released until next year, so until then you'll just have to drag your knuckles and make like a chimp. **PCZ**

**“The story unravels over 15 huge levels, incorporating intelligent puzzles, and skirmishes with a variety of foes including giant bats and rabid hyenas”**

20th Century kind (soon to become 21st) that is set to remake the film, rumoured to be starring Arnold Schwarzenegger in the lead role made legend by Heston.

So, the game. Billed as an action adventure, you play the role of Ulysses, the sole survivor of a crashed spaceship on an uncharted planet 1000 years into the future. And (if you've never seen the film) you soon discover that evolution has taken a macabre twist whereby apes rule, and

Both firepower and discretion will come into play, with three different modes used to negotiate the environment, namely Stealth, Normal and Athletic. In addition to the action elements, the game is set to feature over 2000 lines of dialogue. Some original characters from the films have been maintained, but

➡ **Evolution has taken a macabre twist whereby apes rule.**



# TOP STORY

For people who can't  
be bothered with  
cash machines.

# CLEAR THE AREA, THEY'RE MOVING IN

# SWAT 3:

# CLOSE-QUARTERS BATTLE

## ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**DEVELOPER** Sierra Studios

**PUBLISHER** Sierra

**EXPECTED RELEASE DATE** Late '99

## IN SUMMARY

The latest contender for the *Rainbow Six* (PCZ #69, 89%) mantle, based on real life SWAT tactics, and boasting an impressive 3D engine. And definitely better than its predecessors.

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

There's nothing better than a good strategic shooter that requires deep thinking and a certain degree of stealth. And this one looks exceedingly good

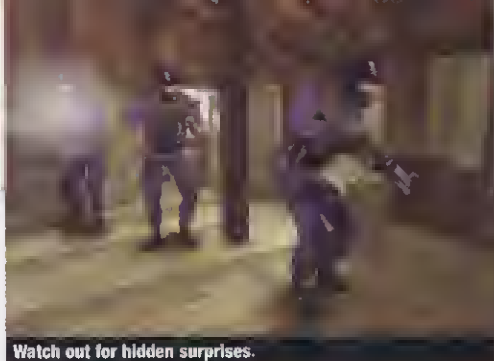
## POTENTIAL PITFALLS

It may fail to balance realism with playability. The series' prolonged existence is based on its popularity with a spotty American audience that watches *COPS* religiously.

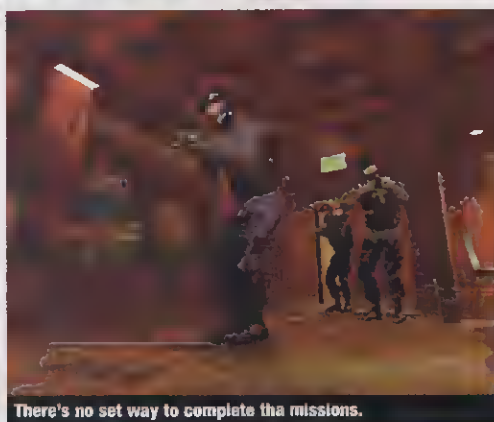
The battle for best 3D strategic shooter is on

★ **DISTURBING THE PEACE** Mark Hill





Watch out for hidden surprises.



There's no set way to complete the missions.



After the world's most despised criminals: graffiti artists.



Reports of far right-wing activities lead to a visit to Tom Clancy's house.



Close quarters of the third kind.

**P**revious instalments of *SWAT* have hardly bowled us over with stunning graphics and exciting strategic gameplay, which is why the announcement of a third game didn't cause us to break into hot sweats of anticipation.

However, the continuing metamorphosis of the series sees it dropping the *Police Quest* prefix and the *X-COM: Apocalypse* isometric view in favour of a real-time 3D, *Rainbow Six*-style tactical shoot 'em up. And boy does it look all the better for it.

You take on the role of leader of a five-man assault team. While you control only one person directly, you are responsible for equipping the rest of your squad, assigning their positions and generally bossing them about. The action takes place in a first-person perspective, but thanks to the tiny cameras built into each team member's helmet you can switch points of view to your heart's content.

It's important to remember that *SWAT* squads, despite all their training in specialised weapons and advanced tactics, are still part of the police department. So the 20 missions, which take place in LA in the year 2005, have the freshness of an urban setting over the usual international conflict-torn battlefields, embassies and military camps. Expect to face such deadly foes as religious fanatics, redneck survivalists, an maniacal citizens entrenched in suburban homes.

A typical mission will probably go something like this: track down a kidnapper's phone call, abseil down the side of his house, smash windows in, throw smoke bombs through an exploding front door, and shout like crazy while letting machine-guns rip... Only to find a big room, empty except for a startled fat couple lying naked on a bed.

Once again, the development team have worked closely with actual *SWAT* officers to produce realistic

tactics and situations. Hopefully it won't go as far as *SWAT 2* (PCZ #69, 68%), where codes of engagement were observed so closely that the gameplay became lifeless and boring. Realism is all very well, but do you really want to observe every matter of protocol when you're about to shoot your way into a house full of armed fundamentalists? On the other hand, knowing that there are certain rules you have to play by forces you to approach the game differently and think before you act. Which is good.

**“Given that the enemy AI promises to be far more complex than in other games of this type, you need to think on your feet”**

The game offers plenty of tactical depth, giving you the power not only to set out a detailed plan of action before each mission, as with *Rainbow Six*, but also to assume command of your team's moves during the action. And given that the enemy AI promises

to be far more complex than in other games of this type, you need to think on your feet.

Setting it in 2005 enables the developers to play about with advanced weapons and gadgets without losing touch with the real world. For example, your helmet comes with an electronic display that gives you information on the

environment and your health, as well as enabling you to communicate more efficiently with the rest of your squad.

You can look forward to *SWAT 3* towards the end of this year. We certainly are. **PCZ**

Particle explosions enhance things no end.



Big gun, big holster. Note the vegetation in the background.

## GET READY FOR ONLINE ECSTASY WITH

### ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**DEVELOPER** Dynamix  
**PUBLISHER** Sierra  
**WEBSITE** [www.dynamix.com](http://www.dynamix.com)  
**EXPECTED RELEASE DATE** Spring 2000

### IN SUMMARY

Like the original, *Tribes 2* is primarily an online game in the *Quake* mould. The emphasis is in teamplay, however, and *Tribes 2* looks likely to achieve the greatness the original came so close to.

### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Quantum leap in visuals. Better multiplayer and optimised network code. New weapons, new vehicles, new terrain obstacles. Introduction of a fifth faction.

### POTENTIAL PITFALLS

If bots don't make it, a purely online game will limit *Tribes 2*'s mass-market appeal. However, the inclusion of *Starsiege 2* might just cure that little problem.

# TRIBES 2

*Tribes* is big. *Tribes 2* will be bigger. Dynamix again show us that they know what team gamers want

★ **MULTIPLAYER MAD** Phil Ward





Lightning can strike players as well as the scenery.



Faction bases now look more purposeful than before.



Doesn't look quite as inviting as The Maldives, does it?

Tribes 2's visual effects stunned visitors to Sierra's booth at E3.



Meet Thag, a BioDerm. He wants to kill you.



It's d-d-dark. I'm s-s-scared. Can't we p-p-play Mario Kart instead?

**W**ith *Team Fortress Classic* riding ever higher in the online charts, and *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III* waiting in the wings, *Tribes 2* needs to be good. Real good. Developers Dynamix need to retain the predecessor's breakneck speed and effortless connectivity, and add a raft of new weapons, new factions, new maps and new graphics. And we reckon they've done it.

The most obvious difference between *Tribes* and *Tribes 2* is the way it looks. The rather angular and wishy-washy decor from the first instalment has been replaced by a rich world of textures, remodelled polygons and dynamic weather effects; a deep ocean laps at the beaches of craggy islands, enabling crewed submersibles to approach unchallenged (more about that later); fingers of lightning reach out to tickle the ground far off in the distance, with intense explosions

filling the foreground; and as before, there's the seamless transition from interior to exterior environments across 30 or so new levels.

According to Nels Bruckner, lead programmer at Dynamix, all the next-generation visuals are actually based on old code. This means that the widely praised terrain engine has been retained and the frame rate kept high. The only downside is that you need a beefy 3D card and OpenGL drivers in order to experience all the glossy tricks (although by the time the game is released next year that shouldn't be an issue). Dynamix are also looking at supporting 3DNow! and other processor extensions, but won't promise anything.

Things are much the same on the networking side, with existing code being revised rather than rewritten. The only major factor affecting gameplay was the CPU load of the host machine. With the maximum number of players being raised in *Tribes 2*, Dynamix are working feverishly to

optimise the server software. They're also set to release a Linux version of the dedicated host (much like Valve have done with *Half-Life*) to help boost support in the UNIX community, and a Macintosh version to increase the user base. There's also a chance that the new game will come bundled in the same box as *Starsiege Universe 2*, as per the previous version, although Sierra aren't committing themselves.

What is certain is that it will be much easier for new players to get into things. This means faster, easier access

BioDerms, a genetically engineered race of human slaves whose ultimate goal is to destroy mankind. Like the others, they have access to three armour classes and the standard weapons set (due to be expanded by five or so new guns). Real-time voice communication is also set to make an appearance, although exactly how this will integrate with the game interface, and what hardware you'll need to utilise it is still unclear.

New vehicles are currently on the factory floor, and include a two-man

## “Rumours abound that a single-player game will feature intelligent bots roaming the landscape”

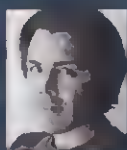
to servers, plus new training missions and a practice mode. Rumours abound that a single-player game will feature intelligent bots roaming the landscape to provide a fun alternative to a huge phone bill.

Making their first appearance in *Tribes 2* are a new faction called

dune buggy and a hunter-killer submarine. A different set of physics and realism will be introduced for underwater vehicles, players and weaponry, meaning it's going to be a whole new world down below the waves as well as a whole new world up top. We can't wait. [E]

# ORIGINAL SIN

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



We're as guilty as anyone when we bemoan the fact that there's a lack of originality in

games design these days. In a sense, and looking at most of the games coming out this year, it certainly seems to be the case that, apart from a handful of games, most titles are just variations on a theme.

More important than originality though are quality and variety. One of the most original games I can remember from recent months is *Vangers*, which is so original that it's about as accessible as Chris's wallet. To say *Vangers* disappeared into the obscurity from whence it came would be an understatement.

If you asked which games we were most looking forward to this year, most – if not all – will be derivatives of an existing title. The fact is, though, that while I can hardly say that I'm looking forward to *C&C: Tiberian Sun* with dribbling anticipation, a hell of a lot of people are, for the simple fact that developers Westwood know how to design a game that is accessible and keeps people hooked to the very end. Ask yourself which games you're looking forward to – how original are they? Not very, I'll wager.

Who cares if a game is unoriginal when it's simply brimming with features and keeps you up until your eyelids are hanging over your chin, as was the case with *Charlie and Dungeon Keeper II*. One view I like to take is that originality comes hand in hand with technology. It's only because PCs are as powerful as they are that first-person action games can incorporate elements found in strategy games. What is happening is that genres are starting to merge into each other, and it's this that provokes originality. But, as I said before, originality isn't everything. One day these words will come to haunt me, I'm sure. (Yes they will – see Chris's editorial leader on page 8.)

## THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

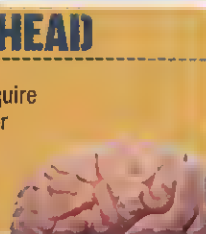
P.25



## TECH-HEAD

Microsoft acquire ShadowFactor

P.30



Behind enemy lines, again.

# COMMANDOS SEQUEL

Without a doubt one of the most impressive looking titles at E3 this year was *Commandos 2*, the sequel to last year's surprise hit WWII strategy game. It wasn't so much about being behind enemy lines as behind closed doors, as a select few managed to squeeze into Eidos' small cinema to watch a rolling demo of the game. And to be honest, *Commandos 2* looked so good it was difficult to believe the characters weren't real actors superimposed onto real backgrounds. Still featuring 2D rendered backgrounds, the scenery was far more interactive than in the first game, with windows blasting out and gunfire leaving indelible marks on buildings. Most impressive of all was the movement of the characters, as one scene showed a commando climbing over railings and bursting through a window to escape his pursuers. The view then switched from indoor to outdoor to show tanks and troops searching the streets below. Watching one man lying in wait for a guard and falling him as he lit a cigarette was a definite highlight – it was almost as if we were watching a scene from *A Bridge Too Far*.

Afterwards we tried in vain to secure a few screenshots, but even the promise of sexual favours wasn't enough. Still, you can be sure that as soon as we get some they'll be wiped clean and printed here. *Commandos 2* should be completed by winter.

# THE THIEF TRILOGY

Delirious with the success of *Thief: The Dark Project*, publishers Eidos have signed up two sequels – *Thief 2: The Metal Age* and *Thief 3* – which are currently under development at Looking Glass Studios. While the third game is long way off, *Thief 2* should be out early next spring.

Continuing on from the original game, *Thief 2* once again places you in the stealthy shoes of master thief Garrett as he pilfers his way through 16 levels in new areas of the same dark city. Further emphasis is being put on the game's adventure and stealth elements, using an enhanced Dark Engine that will now enable 16-bit texturing and variable translucency. A co-operative multiplayer mode will also be included.

Finally, Eidos plan to release *Thief Gold* in the autumn, an updated version of *The Dark Project* featuring three new missions and a level editor.

Garrett the thief will return, at least twice.





## UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

Come and show us what you're made of

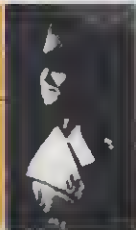
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## MAN WHO KNOWS

The very latest industry gossip

P.34



## CONSOLE ZONE

Sega, Sony and Nintendo at E3

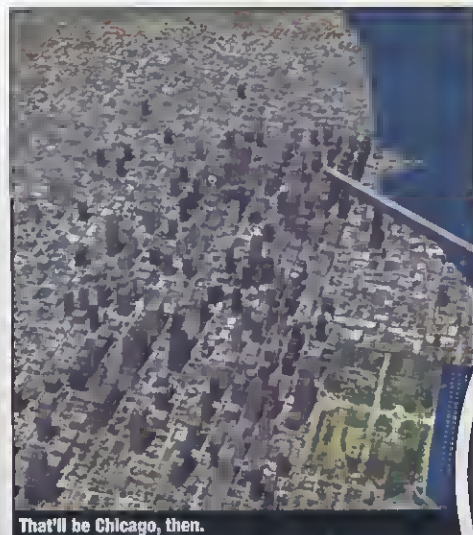
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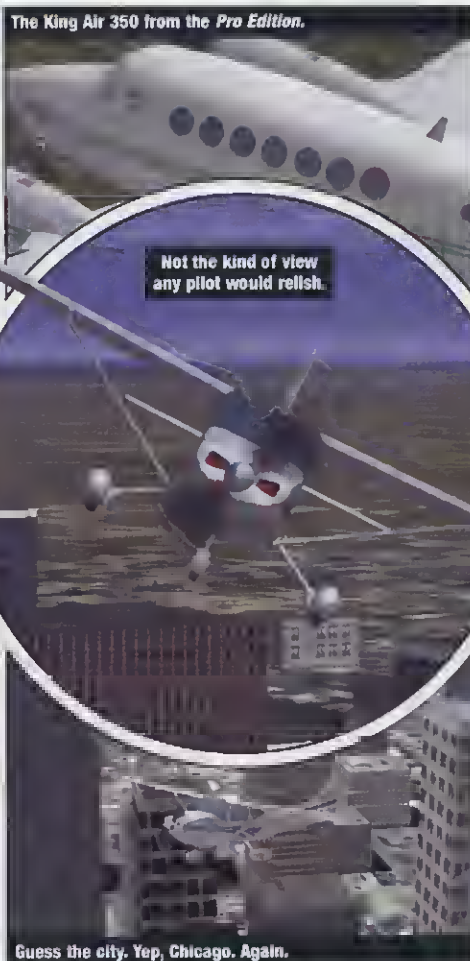
## HOTSHOTS

A sneak preview of up-and-coming game releases

P.38



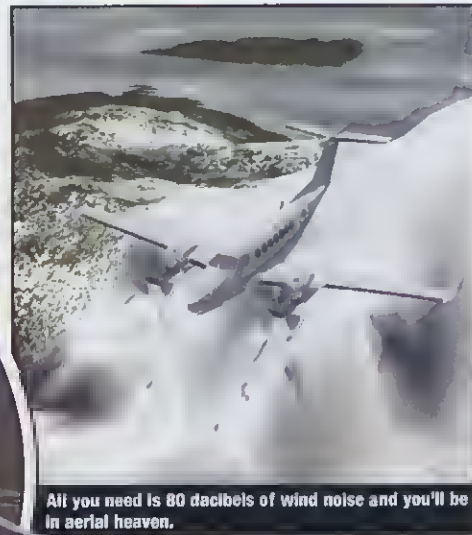
That'll be Chicago, then.



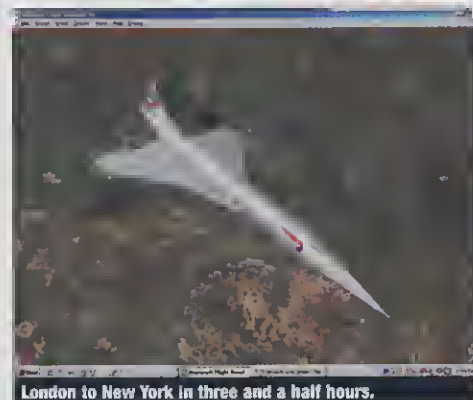
The King Air 350 from the Pro Edition.

Not the kind of view any pilot would relish.

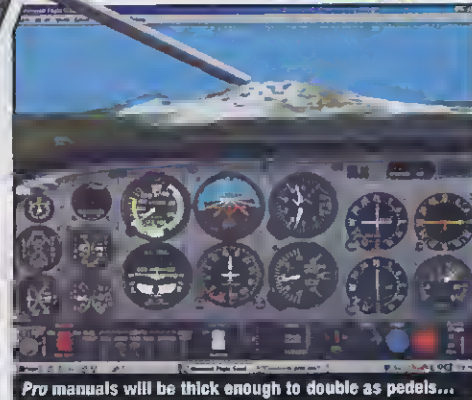
Guess the city. Yep, Chicago. Again.



All you need is 80 decibels of wind noise and you'll be in aerial heaven.



London to New York in three and a half hours.



Pro manuals will be thick enough to double as pedals...

# SPOILING FOR A FLIGHT

Microsoft hope *Flight Sim 2000* will maintain the company's altitude in the flight sim market

Microsoft have dominated the serious flight sim market ever since their best-selling *Flight Simulator* first appeared in the '80s, but despite the recent facelift in *Flight Sim 98* they're not throttling back on development. Perhaps that's because they might not have things their own way for too long.

With touchdown for its next version, *Flight Sim 2000*, now pencilled in for November, there are more ultra-realistic flight sims lined up on the same approach: July sees Terminal Reality's *Fly!*, later we'll see *Flight Unlimited III*, and Sierra have just announced *Pro Pilot 2000*.

The recently announced *FS2000* lets you clamber into the virtual cockpits of two more aircraft – Concorde and the Boeing 777-300 – and includes further updates for existing aircraft. Most of the planned improvements, however, are to do

with graphics. Support for Pentium III instructions and 16-bit colour video displays should speed things up, while extra 3D objects such as vehicles, ships and towers, and enhanced weather effects will boost realism still further. You can even download

**“The Pro package will have some really complicated, completely over-the-top stuff like hi-res Instrument Flight Rules panels”**

current weather information over the Internet and see it simulated on screen.

For navigators, *FS2000* features moving maps, GPS references, a graphical flight planner, and digitised NavData charts. Other improvements include 17,000 more airports and around 50 cities

in detail. Six of the cities – New York, Paris, London, Los Angeles, Chicago and San Francisco – are fully rendered in 3D.

As if that wasn't enough, there'll even be a *Flight Sim 2000 Pro*. Yes, incurable prop-heads will have still more aircraft – the unlikely sounding Mooney Bravo, and the King Air 350 – and another six cities in hi-res to fly around, including Berlin, Tokyo and Rome. The *Pro* package will also have some really complicated, completely over-the-top stuff like high-resolution Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) instruction panels and mountains of extra manuals. It will also have totally pointless stuff like a cockpit editor and a flight dynamics editor. In fact, it will be so realistic that you'll have to lean out of the window and kick-start your own propeller.

*FS2000* will cost £49.99, the *Pro* version £69.99, and both use Direct3D.



Fighting for one gang could seriously piss off the others.



Nico use of shadows there.

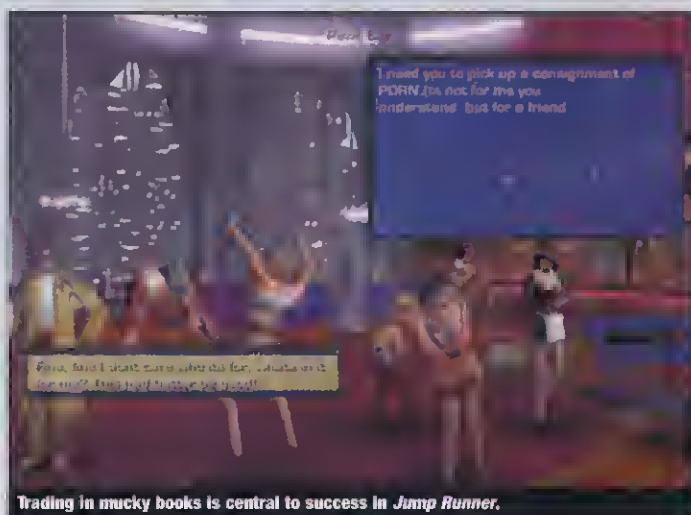
# JUMP RUNNER

File under 'Space combat sim #72'

The year 1999 will be remembered for many things (not least by the survivors of the impending holocaust), one being the number of space combat sims due to be out this year running into double figures.

This month's new announcement is Glass Ghost's *Jump Runner*. Coming from the Privateer 2 school of space combat, *Jump Runner* is an equal mixture of trading, 3D combat and high adventure. You play Ethan Fall, a 'roguish drifter' who after a few drinks in a bar gets landed with a curious Rubik's Cube-type device. Before he even manages to line up three white squares, the place erupts with gunfire and he becomes the target for every bounty hunter in the universe. To solve the mystery of the cube, he has to take on a variety of missions, smuggle goods and fight his way through pirates and police, maybe even joining up with one of the many gangs that control certain parts of the universe.

*Jump Runner* is released at the end of the year.



Trading in mucky books is central to success in *Jump Runner*.

# GOING DOWN, AGAIN

While last year's *Subculture* was undoubtedly a good-looking game, in the all-important gameplay department it was a little shallow to say the least.

Not so *Deep Fighter*, a sequel that promises to extend its predecessor's free-form nature with

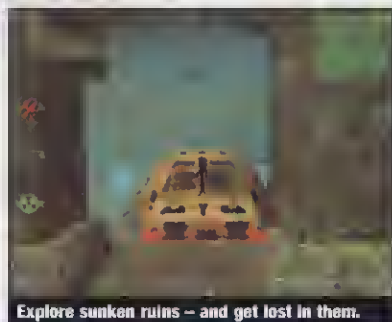
more subaquatic vehicles, a greater variety of missions and even a touch of resource management. Think *Battlezone* set beneath the waves and you're pretty near the mark. Thankfully *Subculture*'s highly atmospheric feel remains

largely intact, with all manner of sea creatures going about their daily business, and the sun and moon light flickering through the currents.

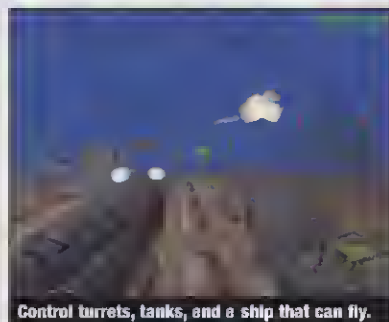
If it all comes off, October will be a good month to pop down the shops for a copy.



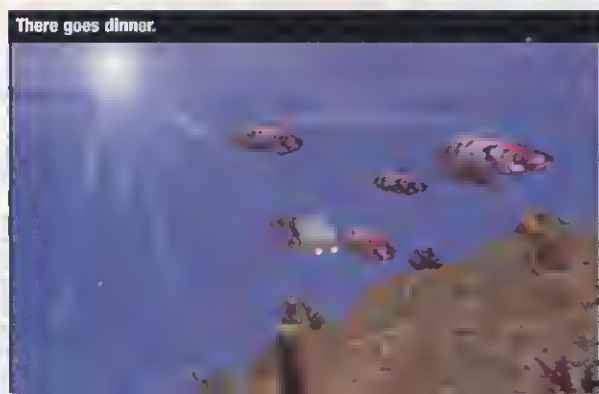
This time, huge capital ships roam the seas.



Explore sunken ruins - and get lost in them.



Control turrets, tanks, and a ship that can fly.



There goes dinner.



So that's what happened to Thunderbird 4.

## SHORTS

### BOWLED OUT

After ex-Eurythmic Dave Stewart's timely release of his England Cricket World Cup single, Empire Interactive are poised to release *International Cricket Captain 2*. Including the recent World Cup competition as well as the new National League, *ICC 2* features new stats for each player, in-game transfers and a new streamlined interface. Chances are the game will enjoy a longer run in the charts that the England cricket team single when it hits the shelves at the end of the summer.

### DRIVING TEST

With 40 licensed cars, 30 tracks and a new physics model, *Test Drive 6* might have been one of the year's most eagerly anticipated driving games, more so even than its spin-off *Test Drive Off-Road 3*. However, since the most recent versions of both games have ranged from arse to average, developers Accolade are going to have to pull something special out of the glove box if they're going to convince anyone to go out and buy the games. Both *Test Drive 6* and *Off-Road 3* are released in the autumn through Infogrames.





# Dramatically Different

The new **Millennium G400 Series** high performance graphics cards for 3D gaming

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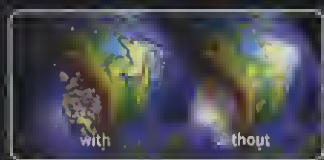
- › Explosive 3D, 2D and DVD performance
- › The only 256-bit DualBus graphics chip
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## The Sharpest

- › True Environment-Mapped Bump Mapping for maximum 3D realism
- › 32-bit rendering, 32-bit texturing and 32-bit Z-buffering with Vibrant Colour Quality<sup>2</sup>
- › 300 or 360 MHz UltraSharp DAC for clear, flicker-free displays

## The Most Versatile

- › Unique DualHead Display supports 8 combinations of RGB, TV and Flat Panel monitors with one AGP card
- › Maintain independent refresh rates and resolutions for a simultaneous, flicker-free TV-out experience



3D Environment-Mapped Bump Mapping



One AGP card supports two displays

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# MAYDAY

## MAYDAY: CONFLICT EARTH

Set in the year 2051 against a backdrop of war and international turmoil. Three confederations currently battle for what remains of the world: The United Continent of America (UCA); the Asian Federation (ASF); and the Southern Block (SBL) and Islamic coalition. You choose to enter into the game from any of these three perspectives - each will result in entirely different game styles and playing approaches. Strategic arcade action with weapons, vehicles, soldiers and espionage.

**No aliens, no alien planets, it is human political conflict in the 22nd century.**

### DEVELOPED FOR DESTRUCTION

True terrain effects which influence placement of units, artillery barrages and movement.

40 missions of varying types: evacuation, escort, sabotage or all out destruction

Full control over Unit attacking/defensive behaviour

Espionage and Weapons Research options

All Units are able to learn from previous conflicts and will adjust their approach accordingly

40 different types of Units and 9 types of buildings

Specialised equipment to update Units and defences including satellite weapons support, teleportation, weapons amplifiers, mine laying etc...

Over 60 minutes of FMV which are an integral part of the game

Multi-player support for up to 4 players Minimum of 15 multi-player cards

Minimum system requirements: Pentium 100Mhz, 16 MB Ram, SVGA, Double Speed CDROM, 50 MB of HD space, Soundblaster card or compatible.

"There is also more to the gameplay than any other real-time strategy game."

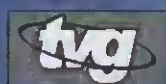
- PC GAMING WORLD

"An entertaining, affordable real-time strategy game."

- PC GAMING WORLD

"Behind the C&C clone front end is a crate of original features."

PC-FORMAT



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Developed by



**OUT: JULY**



# CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what *you* think

## THE MEGASTORES TOP 10

JUN	JUL	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REV SCORE
-	1	<b>MECHWARRIOR 3</b>	MICROPROSE	HAS8RO	85%
-	2	STAR TREK: BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION	MICROPROSE	HAS8RO	89%
-	3	STAR WARS: EPISODE I – THE PHANTOM MENACE	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	78%
-	4	BLADE RUNNER	VIRGIN	VIRGIN	88%
1	5	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
-	6	STAR WARS: EPISODE I – RACER	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	74%
-	7	OFFICIAL FORMULA 1 RACING	EIDOS	EIDOS	86%
-	8	BALDUR'S GATE	INTERPLAY	INTERPLAY	85%
4	9	CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	89%
-	10	POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING	BULLFROG	EA	92%



The Phantom Menace, not the best Star Wars game ever.

## CHART COMMENT

How important is football? Not as important as *Star Wars*. It seems, as *CM3* finally slips from number one to be replaced by *The Phantom Menace*. What is surprising is that people are buying it ahead of seeing the film; H I hadn't already seen H I wouldn't go near the game, and I certainly wouldn't have reviewed it.

*Star Wars* aside, we've seen a lot of movement in the charts. *Birth Of The Federation* enjoyed a single week at number one and *Half-Life* has swept back up to six. Next month we could be seeing a (hopefully uncensored) *Kingpin* securing the top spot.

Richie Shoemaker

## THE TOP 10

JUN	JUL	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REV SCORE
-	1	SW: THE PHANTOM MENACE	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	78%
-	2	ST: BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION	MICROPROSE	HAS8RO	89%
1	3	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
2	4	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON	MICROPROSE	HAS8RO	87%
-	5	STAR WARS: EPISODE 1 – RACER	LUCASARTS	ACTIVISION	74%
-	6	HALF-LIFE	SIERRA	HAVAS	95%
-	7	OFFICIAL FORMULA 1 RACING	EIDOS	EIDOS	86%
4	8	CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	89%
-	9	WORLD CUP CRICKET	EA SPORTS	EA	80%
-	10	GRAND THEFT AUTO	TAKE 2	TAKE 2	92%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 1999)

## THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Birth Of The Federation is okay – if you overlook the sad AI and the fact that it looks like someone just copied new artwork and a new licence on top of *Master Of Orion 2*. I'm not saying that's a bad thing, having played it you wonder why it was done. You can't even design ships or manually engage in combat."

Jason Alcock, Stoke on Trent

"I'm surprised to see *The Phantom Menace* at the top, but I think it was stupid to release the *Star Wars* games over here before the movie. Or might that be LucasFilm's fault by delaying the film's UK release? Yankee bastards!"

The Frew, Middlesbrough

"The only reason the *Star Wars* game is Number 1 is because of hype! Why are people so dumb? Can't they buy a game because of its merits?"

Ade, London

"Official F1 Racing is awful. Thank God I tried the demo first. *F1 Grand Prix 2* did it much, much better. I'll have to ask for *F1GP3* for Christmas."

Bunny, Essex

"I'm sick of all this *Star Wars* hype. From what I hear the film is shite and the games are just as bad. Go and see *The Matrix* instead."

Edward, London

"Nice to see a *Star Trek* game giving a *Star Wars* game a thrashing. You can't beat *Trek* for its sheer scale and immersive atmosphere. A *Star Trek* racing game would be a bad idea, but look at *Star Wars Supremacy*. What a heap!"

Bones, London

## RETRO CHARTS

### 1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 World Cup 98 (EA Sports)
- 2 X-Files: Unrestricted Access (Fox/EA)
- 3 Ultimate Soccer Manager 98 (Sierra/Cendant)
- 4 Championship Manager 97/98 (Eidos)
- 5 Might & Magic VI (Ubi Soft)

### 2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter (LucasArts/Virgin)
- 2 Theme Hospital (Bullfrog/EA)
- 3 Championship Manager 96/97 (Eidos)
- 4 Premier Manager 97 (Grimlin)
- 5 C&C: Red Alert (Westwood/Virgin)

### 5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 Sam & Max Hit The Road (LucasArts/US Gold)
- 2 The 7th Guest/Duna (Telstar)
- 3 Rebel Assault (LucasArts/US Gold)
- 4 Jack Nicklaus CD Compendium (Accolade)
- 5 Megarace (Mindscape)

## WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

**Question:** Who played Anakin Skywalker in *The Phantom Menace*?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with with all the information requested, to the address below

- Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18
- Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies
- Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Send your answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (79), 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Closing date: Friday 16 July

• Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. Capiche?

COMPETITION

# TEAM TORQUE

## Four new chopper sims readying for dust-off

One day, developers are going to run out of aircraft to base flight sims on. Let's face it, the F-15 and F-16 have both been done to death; even planes that aren't even in service yet, like the F-22, are old hat. In the world of helicopters, it's the Longbow Apache and Comanche that have been done to death, and it comes as no surprise to hear that both are about to receive a further flogging from the likes of MicroProse, Empire and NovaLogic.

Thankfully Simis have decided to join up with the Russians for their new chopper sim *KA-52 Team*

*Alligator*. Simis, you may remember, scored a hit with *Team Apache* (PCZ #65, 93%) last year, and *Team Alligator* looks set to repeat that success with a brand new 3D engine and a team management system. Two campaigns and over 100 missions will be on offer, and with a range of new effects including proper day/night cycles and multi-layered clouds, it's no surprise that GT Interactive have snatched up the game for a Christmas release.

Just to spoil Simis' picnic, Empire Interactive recently

unveiled their new effort in the guise of *Enemy Engaged: Comanche Hokum*; a double-billed simulation enabling you to fly either the KA-52 Hokum B or the US Comanche. Of course, quantity is no substitute for quality, but when you remember that Empire are the ones behind *Apache Havoc* (PCZ #73, 94%) you may have a tough decision ahead when *Comanche Hokum* is released around the same time.

**“Gunship III will be fully compatible with the newly announced M1 Tank Platoon 3, enabling some intriguing cat-and-mouse action”**

Sticking in more familiar territory this autumn is *Comanche 4* from NovaLogic. Still content with their ugly VoxelSpace technology, *Comanche 4* at least provides the most realistic terrain engine, as you can hide among grass to avoid visual detection. A new series of missions highlighting the versatility of the Comanche, including some with chemical and nuclear weapons, are to be included. And if you're a fan of NovaLogic's Novaworld online games service, you can look forward to a few

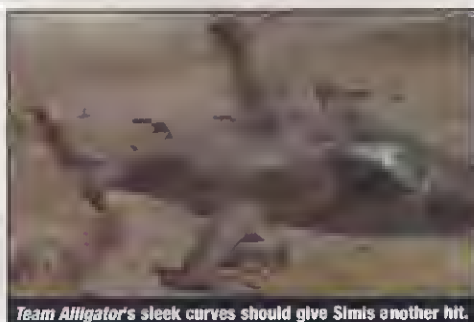
deathmatches with Voice-Over-Net technology, enabling up to 32 players to chatter incessantly as they blow each other out of the sky (which you'd be able to see if we had any screenshots).

Perhaps the most impressive simulation here in terms of features is MicroProse's *Gunship III*, the sequel to the longest running helicopter series of them all. As well as looking quite the young stud, *Gunship III* will feature a

number of choppers that, as far as PC gamers are concerned, have remained in the hanger until now.

As well as the Apache Longbow,

we can expect the old Westland Lynx, Supercobra, Mi-28 Havoc and the European Tiger. A semi-dynamic campaign structure is promised, and you can even take the gunner's chair without fear of the pilot making like a chimp for the nearest tree. Most intriguing of all is that *Gunship III* will be fully compatible with the newly announced tank sim *M1 Tank Platoon 3*, enabling some intriguing tactical cat-and-mouse action. If MicroProse are to be believed, it will follow a few months after *Gunship III* next spring.



Team Alligator's sleek curves should give Simis another hit.



Two of the helicopters from Comanche Hokum.



Gunship III proves there's still life in the Apache yet.



The end of another fun-pecked mission for Team Alligator.



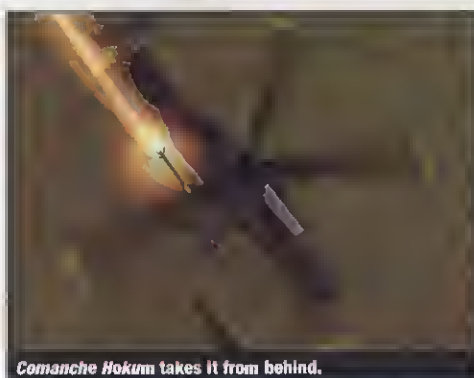
Comanche Hokum is still in its early stages.



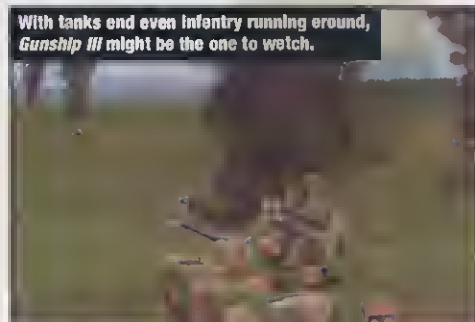
Gunship III's virtual cockpit: locked and unloaded.



Team Alligator will include plenty of ground targets.



Comanche Hokum takes it from behind.



With tanks and even infantry running around, Gunship III might be the one to watch.





Unlike most 3D strategy games, you can look on the action from any angle.

## SWEDISH STRATEGY

If ever there was a Eurovision contest for computer games, *Genesis: Aperia 7* would be the Swedish entry, and a firm favourite for fans of real-time strategy.

As is now standard in the RTS world, *Genesis* sports a whizz-bang 3D-accelerated spinny engine and looks every bit as good as you would expect. Set on the world of Aperia 7, a war is being fought between the Crayven Corporation and the Wrath Coalition. Choosing one of the two sides, your aim is to eliminate the other through 15 missions apiece. Rather than including any real-time resource management, you have to choose and equip your units before accepting each mission, placing them into a number of squads. During the missions, only the squads – not the individual units – can be selected and directed. It should also appeal to action fans, because as well as being fast-paced, the 3D engine will allow hundreds of units on screen at any one time. And with five different terrain types and 13 customisable units for each side, *Genesis* should prove a suitable alternative to *Warzone 2100* when it's released this autumn.

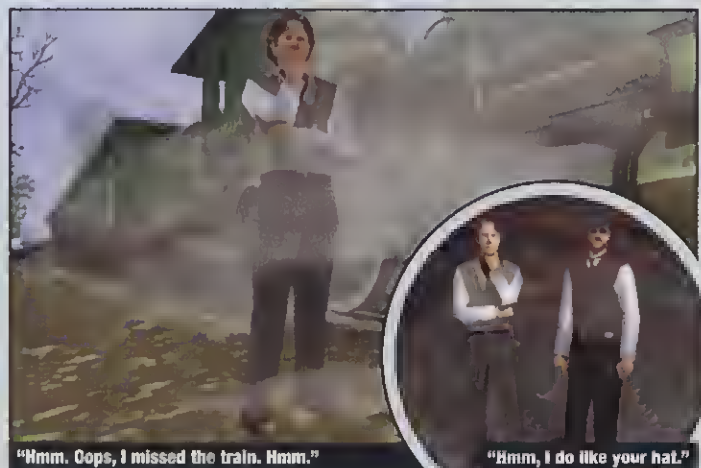
## MEN IN CHAPS

Will 'Fresh Prince' Smith has been helping out developers Southpeak with their small screen version of the movie *Wild Wild West* – just to make sure his on-screen character looks just right, you understand.

Based around events in the film, you control either Will Smith's character, James West, or Artemus Gordon as they set about investigating death threats against US President Ulysses S Grant. The

game will take the form of a 3D adventure, much like the PC version of *Men In Black*. However, it will be entirely mouse-controlled, with the option to adjust gameplay to put the emphasis on either action or adventure, depending on your preference.

*Wild Wild West* – the movie – comes out when the kids break for the summer. The game will follow in November, when they'll have gone back. Hah.

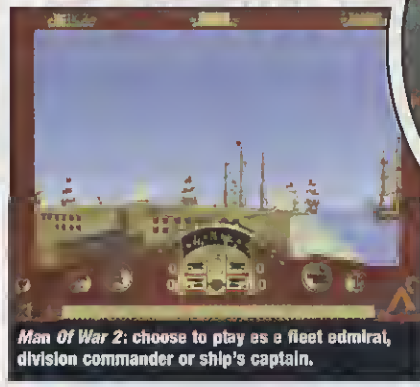


"Hm. Cops, I missed the train. Hm."

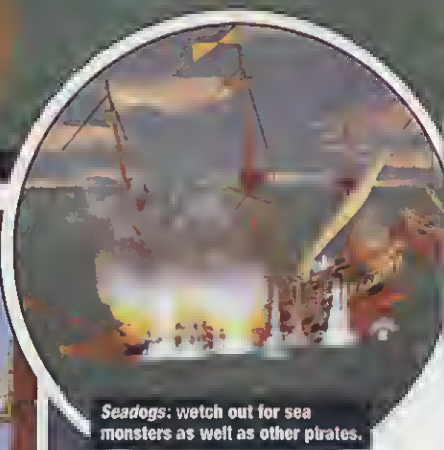
"Hm. I do like your hat."



Wasn't he in an episode of *Captain Pugwash*?



*Man Of War 2*: choose to play as a fleet admiral, division commander or ship's captain.



*Seadogs*: watch out for sea monsters as well as other pirates.



*Corsairs*: recruit assassins to infiltrate enemy ships.

# PIRATE SOFTWARE

After years of drought without a pirate game in sight, there's suddenly a flood of them

Following Hothouse's nifty-looking *Cutthroats*, news reaches us of another three pirate games on the way. The most impressive of the bunch is Akella's provisionally-titled *Seadogs*, in which you play a pirate captain who you can develop in true RPG fashion. There are over 30 missions to be completed in any order, and there are no set paths to follow, allowing you the freedom to roam, explore and pillage at will. Ship battles and swordfighting will take place in glorious 3D, both of which should be tremendous fun in multiplayer when it hits our shores in the autumn.

Released before *Seadogs* is *Corsairs*, from Microids, a more strategic 2D approach to the pirate life, and Strategy First's *Man Of War 2*, which concentrates on the naval combat side of things. Look out for a review of *Corsairs* in next month's issue (on sale Thursday 29 July).

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NEW WORLD COMPUTING

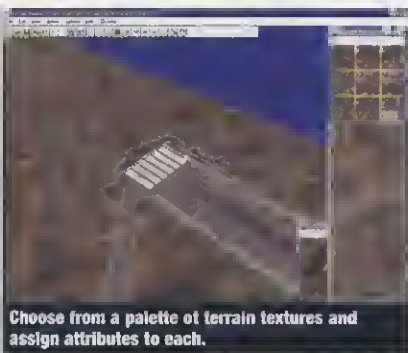
3DO

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# STAR WARS SPECIAL OFFER



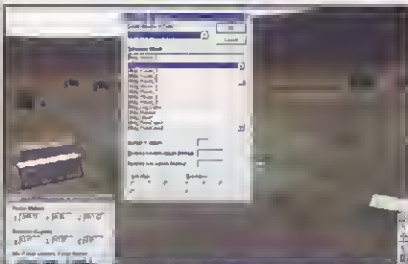
Choose from a palette of terrain textures and assign attributes to each.



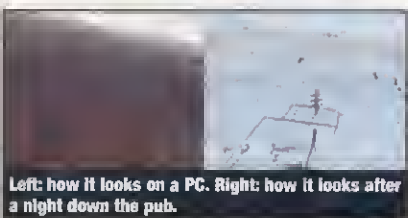
How's about recreating RAF Hendon, circa 1941.

## DIY FLIGHT

If you've ever played a flight sim that left you wanting and you thought you could do better yourself, then to be honest you were probably deluding yourself. However, you could do a lot worse than invest in a copy of *Flight Sim Toolkit 2*. Giving you access to the powerful Daedalus engine that's behind Simis' KA-52 *Team Alligator*, *FST2* will contain a whole suite of features including a world builder, terrain editor, 3D shape editor, texture editor, an object viewer, cockpit editor and an aerodynamic model editor – and not only that, but also a whole library of pre-designed aircraft, buildings and objects that can be used and abused. The 3D engine enables a wealth of weather effects to be incorporated, as well as special effects such as various explosions and smoke effects. And considering how powerful the original *Toolkit* was, you'd do well to get designing on scraps of paper now in readiness for next spring when *Flight Sim Toolkit 2* will be ready for release.



Use ready-made terrain objects or create your own.



Left: how it looks on a PC. Right: how it looks after a night down the pub.



When you buy both *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* and *Star Wars: Episode I – Racer*

\* Recommended retail price

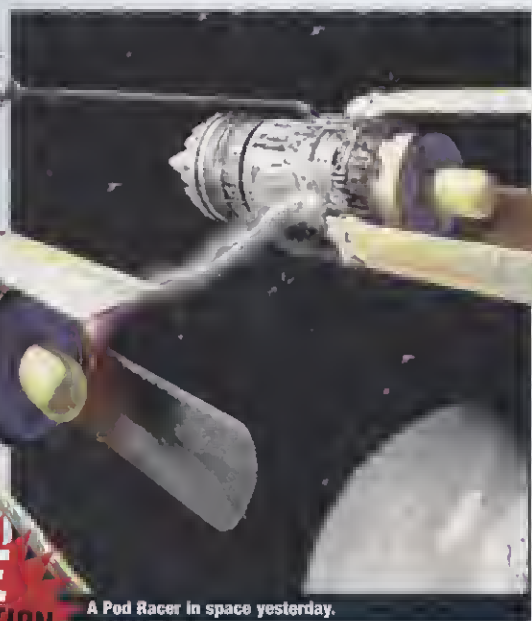
For fans of *Star Wars* we've got an extra special offer for you this month. With a massive saving of £10 on both *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* and *Star Wars: Episode I – Racer*, you can save (whirr... click) 20 quid on the normal high street price if you buy both games. Not only that, but the first 50 to phone through their order will also get a limited edition I-amed Chromart from the original *Trilogy*, worth £14.99, each with a certificate of authenticity from LucasFilm. Only a few thousand of these shiny metallic photo babies were ever produced, and they're already sought-after collector's items.

To qualify for a copy of *Racer* or *The Phantom Menace* at £24.99 (plus p&p) each, all you have to do is phone Gameplay's sales hotline on 0113 234 0444, and if you're quick enough a free Chromart will be winging its way through the post to your very door. Don't forget to quote PCZ412 – Jedi mind tricks won't work on these people. We know, we tried.

**FREE**  
LIMITED EDITION  
CHROMART PRINT  
FOR THE FIRST  
**50**  
CUSTOMERS



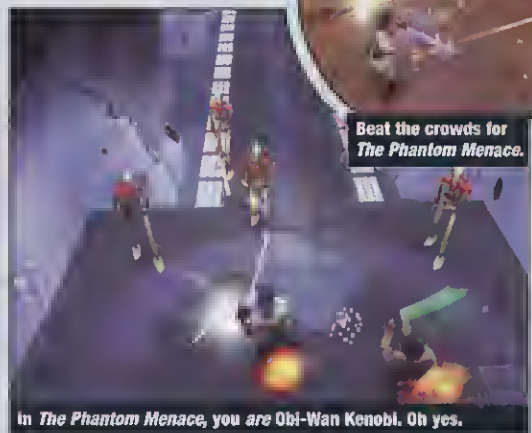
These collectors edition prints are worth £15, and rising.



A Pod Racer in space yesterday.



Episode I – Racer – Yours for £24.99.



Beat the crowds for *The Phantom Menace*.

In *The Phantom Menace*, you are Obi-Wan Kenobi. Oh yes.



# TECHHEAD

Microsoft go shopping (again), while Sony get into electronic pets

★ WORDS Warren Christmas

## IT'S GOOD TO TALK

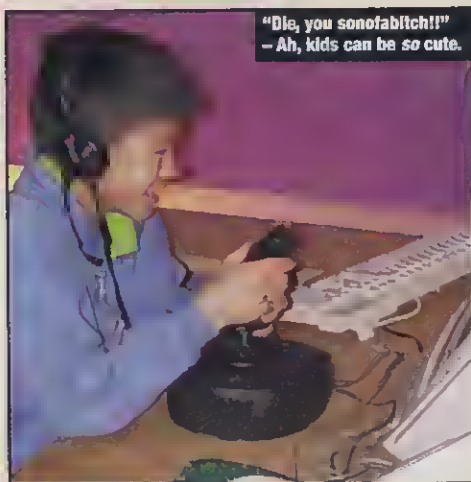
### Microsoft buy voice technology for DirectX

**M**icrosoft have acquired ShadowFactor, the Canadian developer of Battlefield Communicator (BattleCom), the Internet voice software for games, and intend to build the technology into DirectX 8.0.

BattleCom works with any standard modem (that is to say, no specific 'voice' features are required) and doesn't need dedicated game servers. It enables gamers to talk and listen to up to 63 team-mates or opponents while playing multiplayer games. You can set up private channels so that only certain players can listen in to conversations, and switch between different channels at the press of a key.

"BattleCom's real-time voice-over technology is amazing, and we're excited to make it a part of the Windows gaming platform," said Kevin Bachus, group product manager for DirectX at Microsoft. "The ability to talk to other players over the Internet without the hassle of typing dialogue in mid-play adds a new dimension to online gaming."

The introduction of BattleCom into DirectX 8.0 (which isn't expected to be released until late next summer) should help standardise voice technology in multiplayer gaming. Although several companies, including NovaLogic, ThrustMaster, Mpath and Multitude (*Fire Team* - PCZ #7B, 40%)



"Die, you sonofabitch!!"  
— Ah, kids can be so cute.

currently offer solutions, the feature has failed to take off to any significant level.

Microsoft have also announced that they are to license Environmental Audio Extension (EAX) sound effects from Creative Labs for use in future versions of DirectX. The company already utilises A3D extensions from Aureal's rival technology. You can find everything you ever wanted to know about DirectX (and a lot more besides) at [www.microsoft.com/directx/default.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/directx/default.asp).

## FACTCANNON

★ Microsoft have released Windows 98 Second Edition, which is designed to be faster and easier to use than the original version of the operating system, particularly for online use. Both full and upgrade packages are available (UK prices are unavailable at the time of writing). The next update, Consumer Windows, will be released next year, with a home user version of Windows 2000 (formerly known as Windows NT) to follow in 2001 at the earliest.

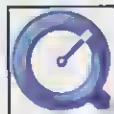


★ Sony have developed a new, single laser device unit which can read both DVDs and CDs. DVD players currently on the market include a separate laser pickup to ensure backwards compatibility. The new technology will feature in the 'PlayStation 2', due for launch in Japan next March.

★ Computer manufacturer Dell and satellite company BskyB have become the latest companies to offer free, unlimited Internet access. Software for DellNet ([www.DellNet.co.uk](http://www.DellNet.co.uk)) will come pre-installed on all Dell machines in the future, but the service is also available to non-Dell owners. Details on the BskyB service can be found at [www.skynow.co.uk/](http://www.skynow.co.uk/).

★ Intel haven't confirmed it, but our sources indicate that the company's 500MHz Celeron processor – and PCs based on the chip – will be launched in the UK in the first week of August.

★ Apple have released QuickTime 4.0, the media player for live and stored video and audio. More than five million users downloaded the beta version, helped by Apple's exclusive hosting of the *Star Wars* movie trailer prior to its release, which was downloaded by 18 million users. The finished version of QuickTime 4.0 is available free to download from [www.apple.com/quicktime/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/).



★ British-based peripheral manufacturers VideoLogic are to change their name to Imagination Technologies Group plc as it looks to "position itself to take advantage of the digital/Internet era."

★ Creative have released a major software upgrade which offers "a treasure of new apps, features, functionality, new technology, ease of use and connectivity" for owners of SoundBlaster Live! audio cards. LiveWare 2.0 is available as a free download from [www.sblive.com/](http://www.sblive.com/), or on CD-ROM for £9 from <http://store.europe.soundblaster.com/>. Meanwhile, the company has set up a website dedicated to its upcoming range of portable 'Nomad' MP3 players. It's at [www.nomadworld.com/](http://www.nomadworld.com/).

## SONY'S WONDERDOG

### Japanese lap up AIBO robotic dog

Sony sold their entire first litter of robotic dogs in just 20 minutes when they went on sale in Japan in early June.

Just 5000 of the \$2000 puppy-sized electronic pets – the first robots designed for home entertainment purposes – were made available, of which 3000 went on



Woof!

sale in Japan, with the rest sold in the United States via Sony's website.

AIBO (the name comes from the words Artificial Intelligence and robot and is similar to 'aibou', the Japanese word for 'pal') can play, bark, talk

and develop its own personality thanks to the inclusion of various motion sensors, an infra-red detector and a colour camera. It can't, however, fetch sticks or lick its privates.

The dogs feature Sony's new Memory Stick technology, a new re-recordable storage media which is just 1.5 inches long and the thickness of a credit card, and AperiOS, the company's real-time operating system which is also likely to be used in set-top boxes.

To see the dog in action, or for more information, take a look at Sony's dedicated website at [www.world.sony.com/robot/](http://www.world.sony.com/robot/).



Pooper-scoopers at the ready – especially at \$2000.



The advertisement features a large, dynamic image of a motorcycle racer in a white and red suit with the number 111, leaning into a turn. The background is a blurred racetrack. In the top right corner, the Castrol Honda logo is displayed with the text 'WORLD SUPERBIKE TEAM' and 'SUPERBIKE 2000'. The word 'RUSH' is written in large, green, 3D letters across the middle. At the bottom left, there is a small inset image of the game's cover art showing a motorcycle on a track with an NGK sign. The bottom of the ad contains a paragraph of text, several logos (Interactive Entertainment, MIDAS, a starburst logo, and PC CD), and a website URL.

**Castrol**  
**HONDA**  
WORLD SUPERBIKE TEAM  
**SUPERBIKE**  
**2000**

RUSH

OUT AND GET YOUR HANDS ON  
CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKE 2000.

Castrol Honda Superbike 2000 supersedes all that has gone before. The game brings the complete motorcycle-racing package straight into your home. This is true simulation software where the detail is phenomenal. Now you can tinker and tweak the performance of your bike without worrying about oil on the carpet!



[www.gamesarena.com](http://www.gamesarena.com)

# UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY

PCZONE

COMPUTER SHOPPER

THE PLAYING FIELDS

AND SPONSORED BY

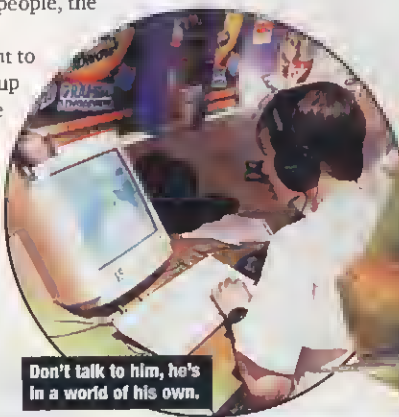
msn  
Gaming Zone  
www.zone.msn.co.uk

3DNOW!  
Technology from AMD

As the dust settles on the first regional qualifying round, we bring you the winners, the high scores and the photographic evidence

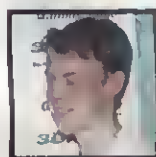
We always knew it was going to be a close contest, but the showdown in London in the first of the UK PC Games Championship qualifiers proved to be a bloody battle indeed. Performing under pressure, sweating under the spotlights and surrounded by people, the players' gaming mettle was tested to the full. The competition went right to the wire. And if you want to know what sort of competition you're going to be up against if you plan to reach the final, check out the high scores and get practising.

From what we hear, the Birmingham qualifiers were just as tense, as you can see from the final scores. We can look forward to further epic battles as Cardiff and Glasgow gear up for their own regional qualifiers. In next month's issue (on sale Thursday 29 July) we'll be bringing you reports on more qualifiers as well as taking a look at what's happening for the final. If you can't wait that long, take a look at the official UK PC Games Championship at [www.ukpcg.com](http://www.ukpcg.com).



## THE HIGH SCORES SO FAR

Set by the South-east contestants at the recent London qualifying session



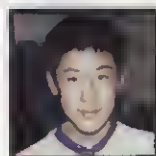
### UNREAL

Name Jon  
Team Unlucky  
Frag 85



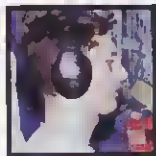
### MOTOCROSS MADNESS

Name Mutz Nutz  
Team The Badgers Nadgers  
Time 12.18



### QUAKE II

Name Lambo  
Team The Kraze  
Frag 79



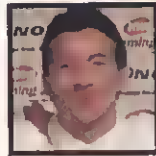
### NEED FOR SPEED III

Name 00  
Team Still Twitching  
Time 13.33



### AGE OF EMPIRES

Name Chris  
Team Unlucky  
Time 08.10



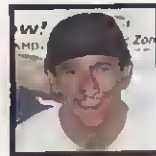
### ACTUA SOCCER 3

Name Darius  
Team Duellist  
Goal margin 25



### TOTAL ANNIHILATION

Name Duellist  
Team Duellist  
Time 13.25



### JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL

Name Darius  
Team Duellist  
Score 75

Fortunately, this reader wasn't allowed to register.

## TOP 10 EXCUSES

We heard 'em all, but these were the best

- 1 The joystick is too big (Duellist)
- 2 I've got no sound... (Rabido)
- 3 The seats were too hard - I popped a grape (Leaping Hermits)
- 4 It's the first time I have played Unreal (Rabido)
- 5 How do I play Total Annihilation? (Taahie)
- 6 Snooker is crap (Raufer)
- 7 My keys don't work! (Che)
- 8 Q2DM8? What pack file is that in? (Unknown)
- 9 The keyboards are too new (Unknown)
- 10 Two left feet, two right hands (1 shot before Total Annihilation defeat) (Unknown)



## JUST IN TIME

Don't just sit there, get your team together

Just found out about the Championships? Suddenly gained enough confidence to face the best? Don't worry, there's still time to enter. As you read this (assuming you didn't wait two weeks before buying the mag) the Cardiff qualifiers are under way (July 3 and 4), followed closely by Glasgow (July 10 and 11). However, the closing date to register for those has already gone. If you can make it to Manchester, you have until July 30 to register, otherwise you can drop in at The Playing Fields in London from July 5 all the way up until August 29. Call The Playing Fields on 0181 383 5850 or check out the website ([www.ukpcgc.com](http://www.ukpcgc.com)) for all the latest news and details.

Remember the importance of a balanced team – there's no point in being the world's greatest *Unreal* fragger without someone else who can ride a mean bike in *Motocross Madness* or command an army in *Age Of Empires*. London's winners scored consistently high in every game, and that's what your team will have to do to win a place in the Grand Final. Good luck.

## MSN IN ACTION

Where to go for a fight

Before you get into the thick of things, we suggest you test and hone your skills on Microsoft's Gaming Zone. Here you can pitch your team against other challengers or find people in your area to join you.

Playing games in the comfort of your own room, wearing your Sunday slippers and calling down to mum for another cup of tea is one thing, but have you got what it takes to be a winner and do it for real under the spotlight and under pressure? There are even prizes to be won online, so there's no excuse not to go to <http://zone.msn.com/uk/news/competition.asp>.

## IN THE FINALS

There were 25 teams fighting it out, but only one stood proud over the crushed skulls of their enemies (or something like that). Unlucky for some

### LONDON REGIONAL QUALIFIER OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS (FINAL)

PLACE	TEAM	Quake 2	Unreal	Total Annihilation	Age Of Empires	Motocross Madness	Need For Speed	Jimmy White's Cue 8 Ball 2	Actua Soccer 3	TOTAL POINTS
1	Unlucky	98	100	95	100	92	82	98	94	759
2	Ouellist	94	80	100	98	94	86	100	100	752
3	The Kraze	100	92	88	94	96	98	75	90	733
4	OwnOr Brigade	96	90	86	96	82	92	89	80	711
5	Still Twitching	92	96	98	82	86	100	96	56	706

### BIRMINGHAM REGIONAL QUALIFIER OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS (FINAL)

PLACE	TEAM	Quake 2	Unreal	Total Annihilation	Age Of Empires	Motocross Madness	Need For Speed	Jimmy White's Cue 8 Ball 2	Actua Soccer 3	TOTAL POINTS
1	Oodgy Spider	92	96	94	92	100	98	96	100	768
2	Fat Scarab	100	94	100	90	94	96	98	90	762
3	Fearsome Foursome	94	90	92	100	98	100	90	94	758
4	3S1G	98	100	86	98	92	94	92	96	756
5	Young Guns	96	92	98	96	88	90	100	88	748

## AMD WITH 3DNOW!: A MIND FOR GAMES

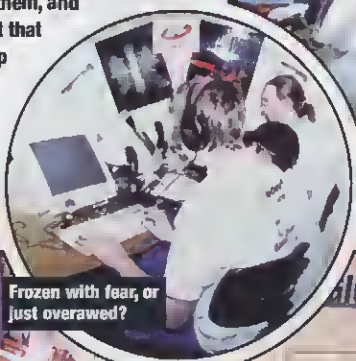
The K6-III bowls everyone over at the qualifiers

High scores were pulverised and lightning-fast reflexes were constantly on show, but the one thing impressed on everyone's minds was how good the games looked and how well they played. Not surprising when you take a look at the specs. Specifically designed for games, the K6-III 400 with 3DNOW! is the beautiful beast powering all the PCs, and even the most cynical of gamers walked away converted to AMD's processor. Working alongside it are the Maxi Gamer Xentor 32 3D card, featuring the awesome power of the TNT2 Ultra chipset, and the new Sonic Vortex2 sound card from VideoLogic, for true 3D audio quality. As if this wasn't enough to knock players off their seats, it's all wrapped up in 128Mb of fast SDRAM. As you can imagine, the games just flew across the screens, barely contained within the 17inch monitors. Thankfully, the players were finally persuaded to start playing the games instead of just sitting there and watching them, and you can see them doing just that below. This awesome set-up was only possible through the work and effort of several people, and special thanks must go to Jackie at Gullelot for all her help.

No more Mr Nice Guy.



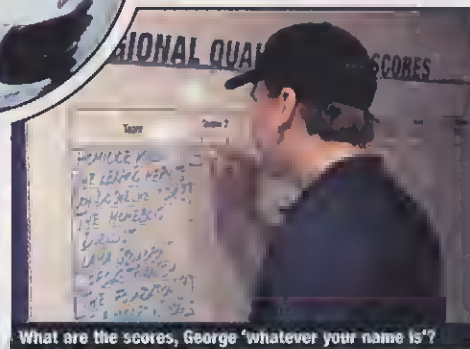
Smells like team spirit...



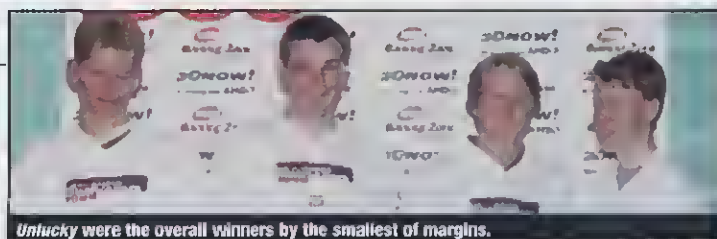
Frozen with fear, or just overawed?



You could cut the atmosphere with a knife.



What are the scores, George 'whatever your name is'?



Unlucky were the overall winners by the smallest of margins.



## The Man who KNOWS

### SAME OLD, SAME OLD

President Clinton has appeared on TV chatting to high school children about the alleged link between video games and violence. Clinton claimed vulnerable children who can't distinguish between fantasy and reality were more likely to be influenced by games like *Doom* and to carry out the kind of horrific acts witnessed in recent months. In response, a website *Doom* master argued that given the number of people who have played the game, it's a very small minority who have gone on to perform violent acts, and the majority who simply enjoy playing a video game should not be victimised because of them.

One student claimed games can desensitise people to death, but the point was also made that people in other countries, especially Japan, play violent video games and yet the number of fatal shootings there is minute compared to the US. The difference, it was argued, is the overt presence of guns in American society – something that has been mentioned in this column before and would appear to be obvious to all but a rank buffoon. Guns kill, not games, and even the President conceded that it is easier than ever to obtain guns in America. Do the math.

An online survey of public opinion conducted by independent research firm PC Data has revealed that 57 per cent of consumers disagree with the concept that playing violent games causes people to become violent. The firm says sales of violent games remained steady over April and May, around the time of the Columbine High school shootings. But the survey also found that consumers believe violence portrayed on television, in movies and in songs has a significant negative influence on behaviour, with only 14 per cent of adults responding that decreased gun access was the solution.

On a lighter note, Lara Croft has got her kit off. Erstwhile Lara model Nell McAndrew will be revealing all for the US edition of *Playboy*. But the terms of her contract forbid the use of the *Tomb Raider* costume, which is now being filled by new girl Lara Weller, whose debut at E3 was notable by the fact that she was shaking like a dog left out overnight in the snow.

Just as things seemed to be calming down at Ion Storm, a further pair of high-profile departures has had website dullards twitching with glee. The two to go are chief executive Todd Porter and creative director Jerry O'Flaherty, who were apparently sacked by John Romero himself during a meeting with Eidos at their San Francisco office. Eidos publishing director John Kavanagh groaned: "Ion-watching is taking the place of real work within the development industry. We urge the press to focus on products, rather than the ridiculous rumours of boardroom antics."

Try releasing some products, then.



First-person combat in lofty arenas.

## HEROES OF FLIGHT & MAGIC

Illusion Softworks, those crazy Czech developers responsible for the surprisingly good *Hidden & Dangerous* (reviewed on page 88), are turning their skills to the racing genre – not on wheels, but with wings. Big flappy ones. Attached to dragons. Some of the other 'vehicles' are of the mechanical variety, kept aloft with magic and helped along with power-ups and upgrades bought with prize money. Others come armed with all manner of weapons and spells. The aim, of course, is to get around the various courses in the shortest possible time by fair means or foul. With 24 flyers, 24 weapons, a career mode and even a few quests along the way, *Flying Heroes* looks like bringing a breath of fresh air to a genre choked with burning rubber.



Richard Branson takes a more primitive approach.



Close Combat IV covers Germany's famous 'last gasp' attack in 1944.

Expect lots of snow, trees and very narrow roads.

## FIGHT THE BULGE

Mindscape have taken over from Microsoft and joined up with Atomic Games to publish *Close Combat IV: Battle Of The Bulge*, which should be in the shops just before Christmas.

The new game covers scenarios and full campaigns from the German 1944 winter offensive in the Ardennes. It adds a strategic level of play where success and failure in one scenario directly impact on the next. You also have to handle supplies, replacements and reinforcements. Enhanced graphics include detailed map animations, air strikes and visual weather effects such as rain and snow.

There are even special German 'infiltration' units, which appear to be American units and which can grab bridges and capture supply dumps.



SMELL FEAR ►

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Bruce does Quake.

Bruce does Tomb Raider.

Bruce does Carmageddon.

# BRUCE DOES VEGAS

Coming this autumn is *Die Hard Trilogy 2*, an action adventure that sees John McClane in Las Vegas, yet again in the wrong place at just the right time, getting caught up in some terrorist activity. Two different modes will be available to gamers: Arcade mode lets you choose between third-person adventure, first-person action or driving; while Movie mode combines all three styles into the main story, which if you haven't guessed already involves killing lots of terrorists.

## YOUR MOST WANTED

A look at the games you're most looking forward to over the next few months, and when they're expected to arrive

- 1 **Driver** (GT) \_\_\_\_\_ Autumn
- 2 **Quake III Arena** (Activision) \_\_\_ Aug
- 3 **C&C: Tiberian Sun** (EA) \_\_\_\_\_ July
- 4 **Dungeon Keeper 2** (EA) \_\_\_\_\_ July
- 5 **Age Of Empires 2** (Microsoft) \_ Sept
- 6 **System Shock 2** (EA) \_\_\_\_\_ Aug
- 7 **Duke Nukem Forever** (GT Interactive) \_\_\_\_\_ Oct/Nov
- 8 **Team Fortress II** (Sierra) \_\_\_\_\_ Winter
- 9 **Diablo 2** (Sierra) \_\_\_\_\_ Autumn
- 10 **Grand Theft Auto 2** (Take 2) \_\_\_\_\_ Oct

**WIN!** Submit your vote and go into the hat for a mystery prize draw. Email us at [letters.pczone@dennts.co.uk](mailto:letters.pczone@dennts.co.uk) with the subject line 'Most Wanted', or write to the usual address.

## TICKERTAPE

**STARTS++** GT Interactive are working on a licenced Harley-Davidson game, *Race Across America*, set to be released in the autumn **++STOP++** *Shogun: Total War*, EA's medieval Japanese 3D strategy game, has slipped to next year to allow for a slew of features to be incorporated **++STOP++** A second mission disc for *Settlers III* is on the way, called *Quest Of The Amazons* **++STOP++** No, it's not a typing error, *GTA: London 1961* is a series of new maps, missions and vehicles for the original *Grand Theft Auto*, and should be available now, free, from [www.rockstargames.com](http://www.rockstargames.com) **++STOP++** *South Park Rally* is... (Cut - Ed) **++ENDS**



## Wireplay

The games network from BT

Online News is sponsored by BT Wireplay

# CONSOLE ZONE

It's a real circus over there, but E3 is about a lot more than just PC games

★ EXPOSING HIMSELF Matthew Burgess

Los Angeles was the venue for this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo, the industry's annual orgy of back-slapping and boozing. Oh, and more new games than a whole battalion of majorettes could shake their sticks at.

Sony announced that their next-generation PlayStation would exist alongside (rather than replace) the current one. An unsurprising move, really, given that PlayStation 2 looks set to weigh in at a parent-unfriendly £300.

PSX 1 is by no means down and out yet though, with a brace of top notch titles on the way: sequels *Gran Turismo 2*, (new cars, tracks and terrain) and *Tekken Tag* (a sort of *Tekken* megamix) should be dead certs for those post-pub 'just one more go' sessions, while *Dino Crisis* transplants the *Resident Evil* scenario on to a remote island tilted with (go on, guess) marauding dinosaurs. From first impressions the game looks good, and is likely to follow the *Resident Evil* series on to the PC at some point (ie after it's been out for ages on PlayStation).

Nintendo seemed on slightly shakier ground. They announced details of their new console (codenamed Dolphin) at the show. The DVD-based system looks great on paper: a 400MHz IBM Gekko processor, 200MHz graphics chip and 3.23 Gb/second memory bandwidth. But though this may be 50 per cent faster than the PlayStation 2, question marks are hanging over Nintendo's ability to deliver, following their delay in bringing the N64 to the market. Still, it will undoubtedly launch with a Shigeru Miyamoto game of unparalleled genius, so we can forgive them a little tardiness.

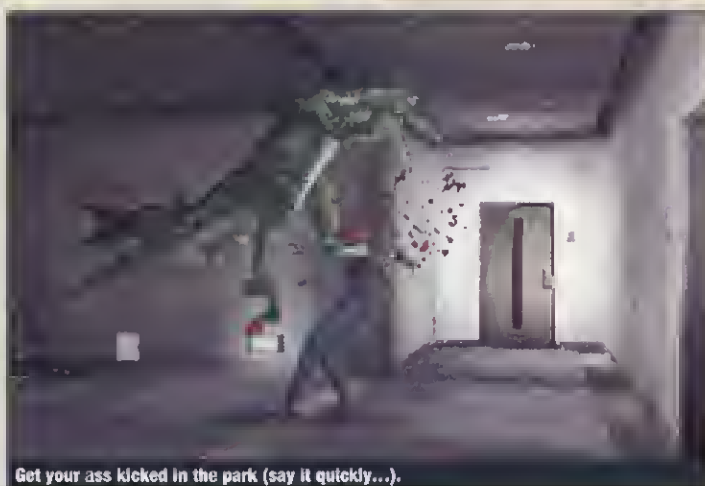
The N64 is not dead yet though - *GoldenEye* follow-up *Perfect Dark* is shaping up nicely. Detractors argue that it is just more of the same, but when the same is one of the finest first-person shooters ever made, who's complaining?

Implausible though it may have seemed a year (even six months) ago, Sega were the stars of the show, with an impressive amount of third-party Dreamcast software on display, of which Namco's gorgeously fluid fighter *Soul Calibur* drew a lot of attention. Sega also announced their plan to launch Dreamcast in the UK with a free modem and no-subscription Internet access in conjunction with BT.

With games and Web surfing the two most popular PC leisure apps, Dreamcast will soon be in a position to compete with our favourite collection of grey boxes. Add a VGA monitor, keyboard, mouse and Zip drive to the basic console and you're looking at a tun-sized PC for just over £600. Sure, it can't do spreadsheets or any of that malarky, but anything that eliminates all those bloody configuration/driver problems has got to be tempting.



Aah, there's nothing like a good slash.



Get your ass kicked in the park (say it quickly...).

RA

# The Kingdoms

RI

IDAR

**T**HE ONCE MAGNIFICENT land of Darien has been brutally divided among four warring sibling monarchs. Now it is time for you to embark upon a massive crusade to rule the Kingdom of Darien.

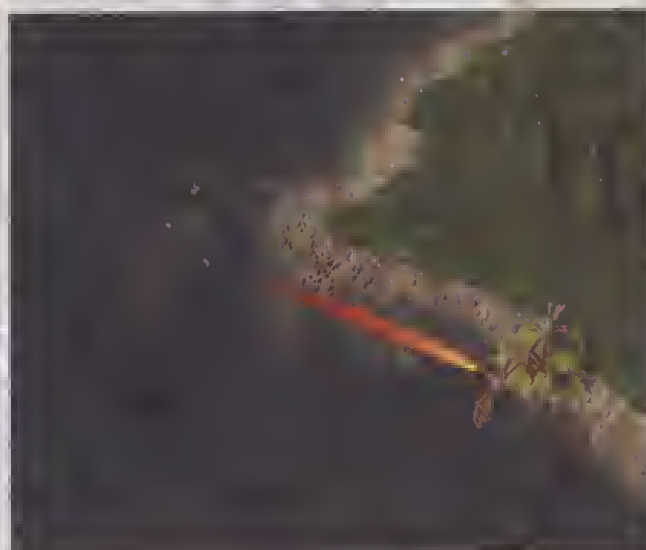
Choose your side, plot your strategy and prepare for the fight of your life: the epic battle to conquer the land of Darien.

## Features

- ☞ The ultimate strategy adventure arrives from the makers of Total Annihilation.
- ☞ Play as one of four unique civilizations with different build hierarchies and combat strategies.
- ☞ Command armies of undead zombies, foot soldiers, dragons and beasts of the earth, sea and sky.
- ☞ Use weapons forged from steel and stone. Attack on foot with swords or at a distance with cannons and catapults.
- ☞ Traverse 3D environments filled with forests, marshes, rolling hills, and mystical keeps.
- ☞ A streamlined and intuitive interface lets you concentrate on the combat.
- ☞ Challenge friends over LAN, modem and on Cavedog Entertainment's own **Boneyards™**.



Attack on full 3D terrain filled with forests, castles and cities.



Charge with hundreds of unique units including monsters, dragons, catapults and skeleton archers.

*"The strategy game of the year... it's a masterpiece."*

— PC Zone 94%

*"It oozes quality"*

— Arcade

*"Were drooling already"*

— PC Gaming World



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# are in chaos...

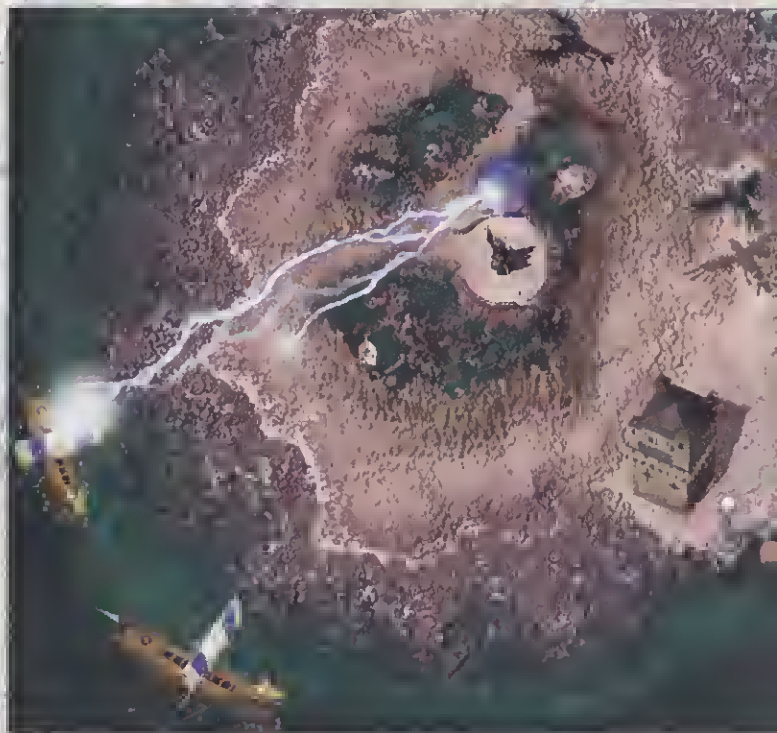


Attack the skulled cliffs of Taron with mighty naval vessels.

For more information on TA Kingdoms and the chance to win exclusive TA Kingdoms prizes call:

09014 747 433

Calls cost 60p per minute. Please obtain the bill payers permission before calling. Likely call duration 2 minutes.



Release magical weapons to destroy enemies.

## The epic battle to conquer Darien begins soon.

# KINGDOMS

TOTAL ANNIHILATION



PC  
CD  
ROM

CAVEDOGS  
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A GT Interactive Company  
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GT

# HOTSHOTS

Before diving head first into our comprehensive Previews section, why not feast your eyes on the visual delights of *Messiah*, *Half-Life: Opposing Force* and *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine*



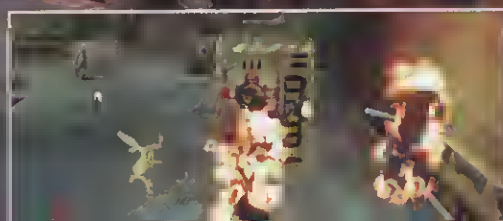
## MESSIAH

★ Interplay • Out October/November

What's the difference between *Daikatana* and *Messiah*? In terms of how long each has been in development, not a lot. Both are sci-fi shooters, although one is a straight-up *Quake* clone and the other is an ingenious twist on the *Tomb Raider* genre.

Playing a cherubic angel, you must thwart Satan's plans of world domination, which is no easy task when all you've got to protect yourself is a cheeky grin and an endless supply of Pampers. Thankfully, with the ability to take over 20 different characters through our huge worlds, that task becomes slightly easier.

Going by the reaction at E3 recently, it's clear that *Messiah* remains one of this year's most eagerly-awaited games. In contrast, interest in *Daikatana* is bound to wane a little more every day.



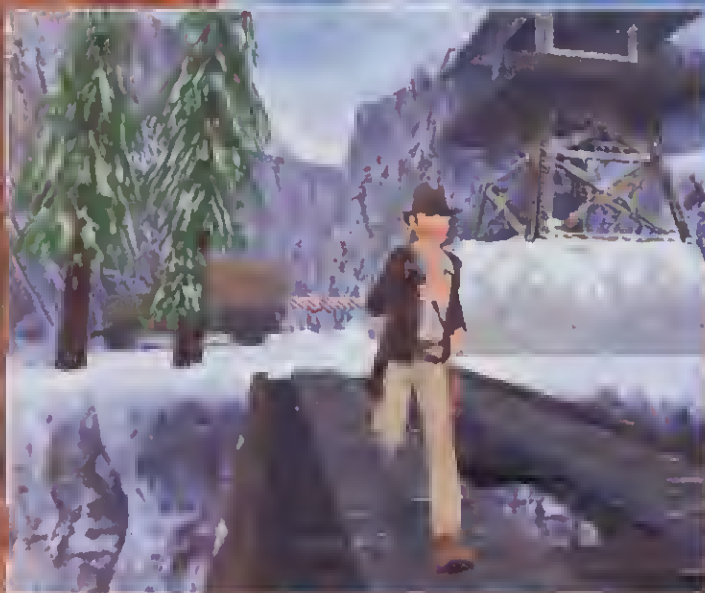
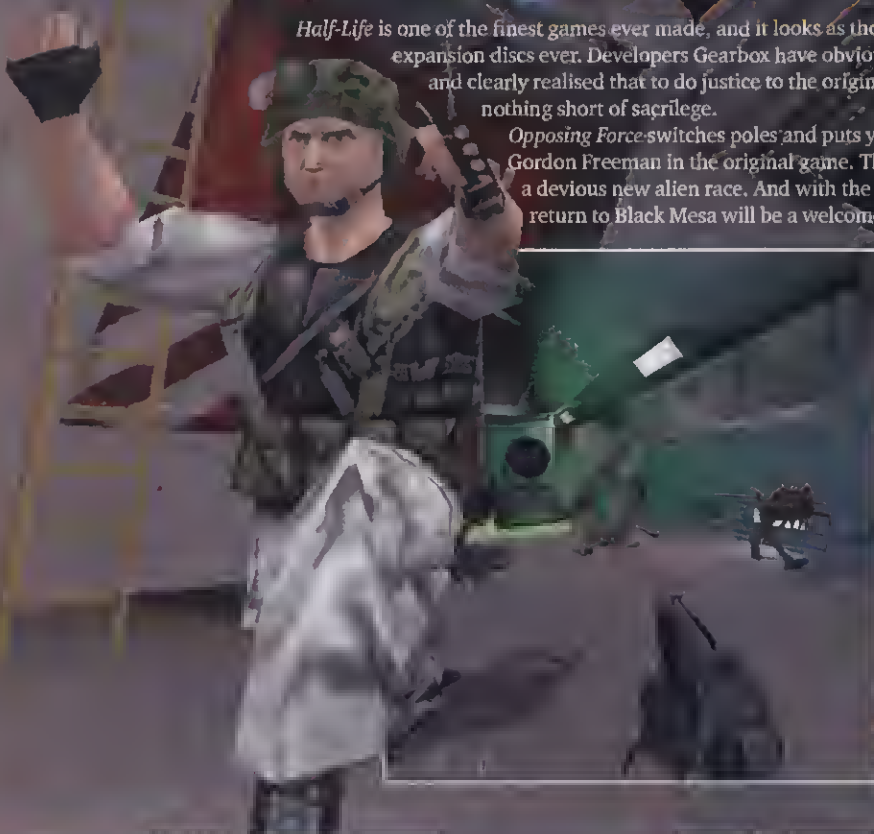


# HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE

★ Sierra • Out October

*Half-Life* is one of the finest games ever made, and it looks as though *Opposing Force* could well be one of the finest expansion discs ever. Developers Gearbox have obviously put a lot of thought into what they want to achieve, and clearly realised that to do justice to the original game a few new levels, guns and aliens would be nothing short of sacrilege.

*Opposing Force* switches poles and puts you in the size nines of one of the soldiers sent against Gordon Freeman in the original game. The team-based AI now works on your side, as well as for a devious new alien race. And with the intriguing barnacle gun, radios and new characters, the return to Black Mesa will be a welcome one.



# INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

★ Activision • Out October

With the Germans vanquished, Indy now finds himself at the beginning of the Cold War in a bid to locate a mythical machine which is in the hands of the Russians, could swing the delicate pendulum of power into the red. With levels based in jungles, temples, deserts and tombs, *The Infernal Machine* looks set to redefine the third-person action adventure. Rafting through rapids and rolling through mines in rickety old carts is only the tip of the iceberg. Who's to stop it, Lara? Who's to see, then?



The size of some of those  
monsters... It's enough to  
give you the ten bob bits.

Sink your teeth into...

# VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE





Real shadows and everything!

Even though he's the most squeamish member of the ZONE team, Paul Mallinson managed to fend everyone off with a string of garlic to preview an early version of this impressive horror role-playing game

**F**ilms about vampires have been haunting the subconscious for, ooh, almost a hundred years. In 1922, FW Murnau's *Nosferatu* terrified audiences with a previously unseen visual fervour. Universal Studios continued the trend with a series of scary vampire pictures in the 1930s, then Hammer came along in the '60s to give a new generation nightmares about hideous, undead, bloodsucking freaks. Throughout the '70s, '80s and '90s, vampire movies have remained a staple diet of the horror industry.

Sadly, the same has never been true of vampire-related computer games. Even fairly successful titles such as *Nosferatu* (a 3D platform puzzler for the ZX Spectrum), CRL's *Dracula* (the first computer game to get an 18 certificate) and *Legacy Of Kain* (Crystal Dynamics' top-down console RPG) have failed to capture the imagination in the same way as their celluloid counterparts. Most vampire games have lacked the atmosphere and visual style to actually scare people, and frustrated vampire/computer geeks have never had anything to get their teeth into, as it were.

But this pitiful situation now looks set to be properly addressed by publishing giant Activision, with *Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption*.

Based on the popular World of Darkness role-playing system from White Wolf Games, *Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption* is a PC interpretation

of their hugely successful gothic-horror-tabletop-storytelling *Vampire* adventure theme. The series, now in its second edition, is popular because it presents fantasy characters such as vampires, werewolves and ghosts in a realistic manner and within a modern-day context.

#### ALL RIGHT FOR FIGHTING

The vampires in the game do not live a life of peace and harmony, but prefer to fight each other for territory and power. They are collectively known as The Kindred and live in the dark recesses of our cities, feeding off the human 'herds' that make up the populace. The 'Masquerade' part of the title refers to their campaign of deception to convince humanity that they do not exist, lest someone should cotton on and wipe them out. Those who are familiar with the vampire movie (or comic) *Blade*

will no doubt recognise this concept.

*Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption* follows the exploits of Christof Romuald,

a 12th century knight in the religious Order of Swordbrethren, a group of Christian Crusaders hell-bent on destroying vampires and their allies.

At the beginning of the game, Christof sets off to Hungary to take on a group of monsters who have been bothering local townsfolk at a silver mine. The battle turns out to be far tougher than expected and, after almost being killed, Christof is sent to a convent in Prague to recover.

While he is convalescing, he becomes the target

of a powerful east European vampire clan, which tracks him down and infiltrates the convent to 'embrace' him as one of their own. It's probably worth mentioning that vampires in White Wolf's role-playing universe 'embrace' humans to make them one of The Kindred, rather than simply biting them.

When Christof realises what has happened, he decides his faith in God was "shallow" and that he has "fallen from grace", becoming a "soulless monster" in the process. Naturally, this gives him all the reason he needs to chop up some vampires in an attempt to salvage what remains of his humanity.

#### NIHILISM

*Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption* is being described by Nihilistic - the game's developers - as an "action RPG".

Nihilistic are an 11-strong development team currently working in Marin County, California. Founded in 1988 and dedicated to "open, collaborative game design and minimal politics", ➔



① Plays a mean banjo...

#### THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Nihilistic

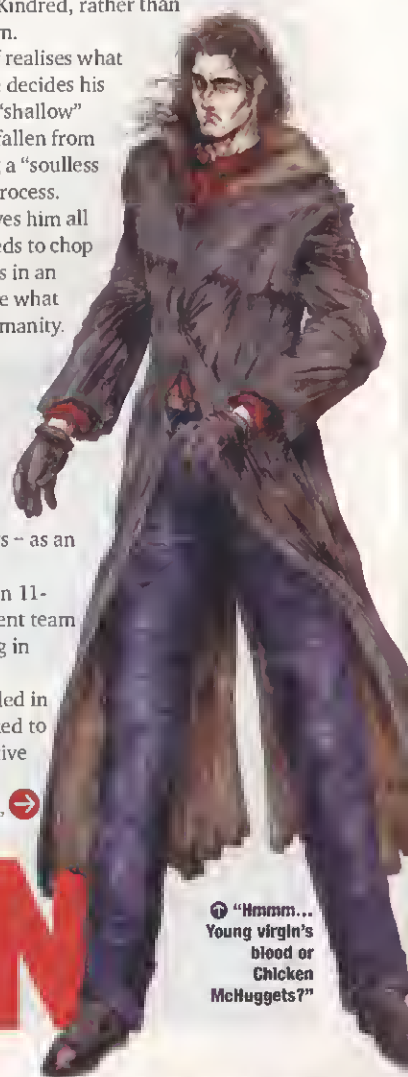
PUBLISHER Activision

WEBSITE [www.nihilistic.com](http://www.nihilistic.com)

OUT November

#### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Designers have good pedigrees
- ★ Another fantastic new 3D engine
- ★ Based on White Wolf's Vampire setting
- ★ Storyline spans 800 years



② "Hmmm... Young virgins' blood or Chicken McNuggets?"


# - REDEMPTION



This will not be another glorified light show.



One dark alley not to walk down.



Excuse me, you have something

➔ Nihilistic's four main players – Ray Gresko, Robert Huebner, Steve Tietze and Ingar Shu – have substantial individual track records, having worked in whole or in part on such classics as *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II*, *Dark Forces*, *Descent*, *StarCraft*, multiple *Quake* mission packs, *Requiem: Avenging Angel*, *Shadows Of The Empire*, *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* and the forthcoming *Obi Wan* from LucasArts. As we said, some track record and, judging by the titles listed, definite proof of Nihilistic's pulling power.

### WORLD OF DARKNESS

In essence, *Vampire: The Masquerade – Redemption* is viewed from a third-person perspective (in other words, you see your character in front of you as you play), although Nihilistic's creative use of camera angles seems to have resulted in something far more cinematic than previously seen in a game of this type. There will be plenty of cut-scenes, all of which will be rendered in real time using the 3D engine. This is clearly a good thing. Not only does it negate those horrible lulls that tear you away from the game itself (and those monitor spasms as the screen resolution changes), it also helps to suspend disbelief and provides a visually superior experience over FMV and pre-rendered alternatives.

As you can see from the screenshots, Nihilistic's experience in the field has resulted in an extremely detailed 3D environment. This detail also extends to the equally excellent character modelling – Christof himself is something of a cross between St George and Vampire Hunter D (an infamous Japanese comic character who chops up vampires with a big sword – Ed). He walks, crouches, jumps,

climbs and fights as convincingly as you'd hope. The other characters – and there are lots of them – also seem to have been lovingly recreated, with cautious mannerisms and flowing capes that blow in the wind.

As far as hard facts go, *Vampire's* 3D engine – created especially for the game – can handle superior three-dimensional lighting effects, volumetric fog, reflections, ripples, smoke... in fact, pretty much everything you'd expect from a 3D engine these days.

**“Nihilistic are hoping it will catch on with the online gaming community. From what we can tell, this could be the kind of online game the hardcore role-playing fraternity has long been crying out for”**

But Nihilistic are concentrating a large proportion of their time on fine-tuning the many atmospheric effects – lightning storms, rain, thunder, fire, brimstone and treacle – that will enhance the feel of the game. There will even be a fully-working simulation of night and day and the four seasons. Nihilistic say they're not throwing in the effects simply because they have the means, and also that they are using every aspect of the engine to enhance the gothic-punk feeling of their representation of the World of Darkness.

Believe it or not, *Vampire: The Masquerade – Redemption's* wicker basket storyline spans over 800 years. Split into two discernible 'acts' over four

different worlds, the game opens in 12th century Prague, then moves on to Vienna in roughly the same era. But after he becomes a vampire, Christof is capable of 'hibernating' and waking up later on – much later on, in fact. The second act, provisionally called The Modern Era, is to be set in present-day London, following on in New York.

Having slept for hundreds of years, Christof wakes up, chisels the sleep from his eyes and resumes his hunt for the vampires who embraced him. At this point, the setting for the game will change dramatically. Horses will be replaced by irate taxi drivers, and sewers by underground transport systems. It could all get a bit confusing for your average 12th century bloodsucker...

But coming to terms with being a vampire – a killer – and facing the consequences of your actions is indicative of the game's fascinating moral ambiguity. To get anywhere, you have to feast on the blood of young virgins on a reasonably regular basis – a fact that you're just going to have to deal with, especially if you fancy building up your vampiric arsenal of weaponry. Kill too many people, though, and the 'vampiric beast' that dwells within will eventually overcome your character and he will go insane with rage and explode. Or as good as.

### IN A SIMILAR VEIN...

Combat, like pretty much everything else in the game, will be governed by the laws of real time. When things hot up and there's a ruck on the horizon, the view will change to accommodate all combatants. Then, using the game's ultra-slick point-and-click cursor system, you'll have to frantically click on anything that moves in the vain

## VAMPIRE VIEWING

Three off-the-wall vampire movies, as recommended by the horror fans here at PC ZONE

### BLOOD FOR DRACULA (1974)

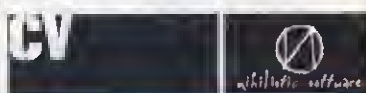
This vampire epic follows the misfortunes of a sick vampire who can only drink the blood of virgins. After discovering a rich family full of them, he then learns that it's best to stay one step ahead of the randy gardener, or suffer long and painful convulsions as a result of drinking 'impure' blood.

### SALEM'S LOT (WARNER BROS, 1979)

This made-for-TV classic was directed by the same guy who brought us the cheerily contemporary classic *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. And it starred David Soul. An unlikely combination maybe, but as a scary vampire movie it's still up there with the best.

### THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS (1967)

Roman Polanski starred in and directed this bizarrely humorous horror classic, presumably while under the influence of alcohol and mind-altering drugs. Although the special effects are quite crude, the film exudes an atmosphere unlike any other in the genre.



### NIHILISTIC

Vampire team cut their teeth at LucasArts

1999 *Vampire* will be Nihilistic's first game. However, the individuals within the team have worked on many of LucasArts' key titles, including *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II*. With such a pedigree behind them, *Vampire* is sure to be nothing less than spectacular.





on your lip.

Vampire is as much about internal character development as statistic development.

You gotta fight... for your right... to suck blood... Or shoot a gun.

hope that you'll survive to fight another day... sorry, night — you *are* a vampire, right?

Nihilistic see *Vampire's* combat sections as being intense and tactically challenging, and from what we've seen, they do look different — in fact, they're not too dissimilar to the fight scenes in Squaresoft's classic *Final Fantasy VII*.

Thankfully, Christof does get some help from a number of unlikely sources and in the game he'll be able to accommodate up to three other people in his party. Although you'll be able to exert some degree of control over these friendly non-player characters, especially in combat situations, they will each have their own artificial intelligence, giving them personalities and traits that will complement your own.

## TELL US A STORY

Taking things even further forward in terms of character interaction, Nihilistic have some very promising plans with regard to the multiplayer aspects of *Vampire*. There will be the usual player-versus-player features, but on top of that there will be the innovative new 'Storyteller' mode — a simulation of the paper game that enables you to take on the role of Storyteller (that's 'DM' to the majority of you role-playing freaks) while your chums battle it out to your rules. You'll get to create your own characters and even locations, using a 3D editing package supplied with the game, then take your new world out on to the Internet for people to play.

Nihilistic are calling this new system Online Tabletop (no doubt...) and are hoping it will really catch on with the online gaming community. From what we can tell, this could be the kind of online game the hardcore role-playing fraternity has long been crying out for. Sure, *Ultima Online* is great in its own right, but this is different. This could be old-skool role-playing kicking back with a vengeance — so get out your dice and your character sheets...

## AND THERE'S MORE

Despite all this scary talk about 'hardcore role-playing', *Vampire: The Masquerade — Redemption* will actually be fairly simple to play. Christof will have about ten stats that can be improved upon, following White Wolf's original model, and we're assured by the developers that you won't find yourself getting bogged down in a sea of endless menus and inventories.

Things are at an early stage, though, and there are still numerous features that have yet to be seen by the outside world.

But with *Vampire* as advanced as it currently is, and a development team that's intent on delivering the eeriest, scariest, most terrifying vampire title ever to be made, we could soon see vampire games rivalling vampire movies in the popularity stakes. **PCZ**

☛ If you want to know more about *Vampire: The Masquerade — Redemption*, be sure to check out our exclusive interview with developers Nihilistic — now showing on the PC ZONE website ([www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk))



## CHRIS HEWISH

*Vampire's* producer gets a stake through the heart

**PCZ** What was the first game you ever played?

**CHRIS** Pong — simple interface and highly addictive. The first arcade game I played was *Battlezone*.

**PCZ** What was the last game you paid good money for?

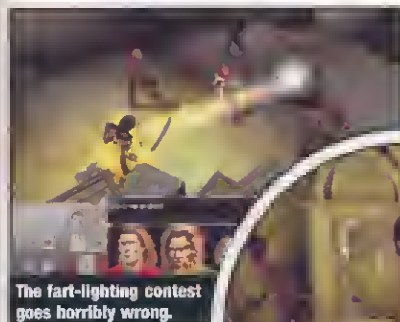
**CHRIS** Well, that would be a little bit of interactive crack called *Everquest*. I just can't seem to kick the habit when it comes to playing that game.

**PCZ** What's your favourite game of all time?

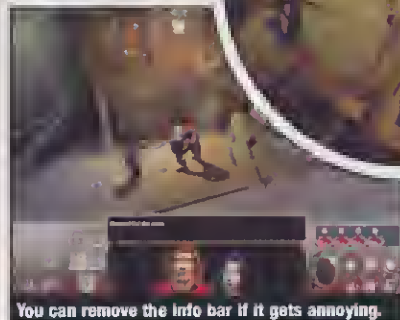
**CHRIS** That's a very tough question. The game I've spent the most time playing is my aforementioned affliction, *Everquest*. But my favourite game of all time is probably *Quake II* or the original *Wing Commander*.

**PCZ** Have you ever been in a fight? If so, what happened?

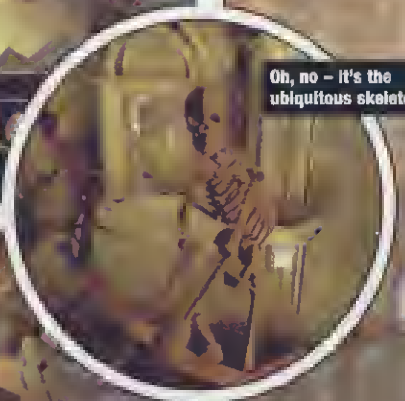
**CHRIS** The last one was a few years back, when some pals and I were walking out of a bar and a local hoodlum mistook my friend for a loan shark he had problems with. The hoodlum sent one of his boys to take down my friend as we walked to our car. Fortunately, I was carrying a small can of pepper spray. Well, a few fists were thrown (and dodged) before I dropped the thug with a shot of chemical irritant. At that point, the boss hoodlum came driving around the corner in his van, with the side door open — which usually signals a gun is about to be used. I quickly dived behind a nearby wall as I didn't have much desire to be involved in a drive-by. Fortunately, he kept on driving, leaving his boy groaning in agony in the middle of the street. We were quick to vacate the area ourselves at that point, as we had no real desire for a second round.



The fart-lighting contest goes horribly wrong.



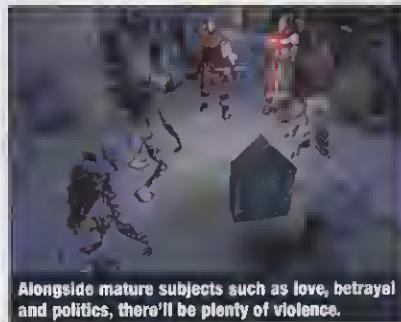
You can remove the info bar if it gets annoying.



Oh, no — it's the ubiquitous skeletons!



A vampire is clinically dead. Its heart does not beat. It does not breathe. It does not age. And this one is a tad miffed that you spilled her crème de menthe.



Alongside mature subjects such as love, betrayal and politics, there'll be plenty of violence.



This is no time to take a nap.

# Architecture, morality, Ted and Alice...

# THE SIMS

CV

## MAXIS

It begins with 'Sim', it's a safe bet that Maxis are involved. Here are a few sim games they've been involved with...

**1980** *SimCity*. The original changed the face of computer games for ever

**1994** *SimCity 2000* (PCZ #13, 92%). More of the same.

**1990** *SimEarth*. A simulation of a planet based on James Lovelock's Gaia theory. Very few laughs.

**1991** *SimAnt*. A scientifically accurate simulation of an ant colony.

**1995** *SimTower* (PCZ #28, 70%). For people with an unnatural interest in lifts.

**1996** *SimCity 3000* (PCZ #74, 92%). Yet more of the same.

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Maxis  
**PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts  
**WEBSITE** [www.ea.com](http://www.ea.com)  
**OUT** Autumn

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's from the creator of *SimCity*
- It's *Little Computer People* for the new millennium
- It's completely open-ended and extremely expandable
- It's a bit twisted

**A**mazing as it may seem, when Will Wright created *SimCity* a decade ago he couldn't find a publisher willing to license the game. Six million copies later, and those potential publishers were left looking like the man who turned down The Beatles. With no one prepared to take a risk on a game that couldn't be won or lost, and which focused on the unusual topic of running a city, Will founded Maxis. The rest, as they say, is history.

Now swallowed up by the behemoth that is Electronic Arts, Maxis have been churning out *Sim*

## *SimCity* meets Tamagotchi in a virtual soap opera? Steve Hill tunes in

games apace, covering almost everything bar the much-anticipated *SimIceCreamVan*. However, for all their variety and innovation, none of the games have yet quite succeeded in capturing either the critical or commercial success of the *SimCity* brand, now in its third – or three-hundredth – incarnation.

Step forward *The Sims*, a game that Will claims to have been dabbling with for the past seven years. He's purposely kept it quiet though, and the game only made its public debut at the recent E3 show in Los Angeles, standing out like a beacon of originality among the mire of sequels, not to mention games that had made

neighbours, form relationships, get married, and pursue careers in fields such as business, entertainment, the military and politics. They can even aspire to a life of crime, moving up the ranks from pickpocket to criminal mastermind.

## SIMULATION STREET

Your Sims can fend for themselves, and don't simply stand around awaiting commands. With your input, however, they can live a much more pleasant life, and *The Sims* has been described as an interactive soap opera. It's not a label creator Will Wright is totally at ease with though: "A lot of people, when they see a

each other depending on some kinds of obscure variables, so not that many will but it's possible to do, and you can get two men to live together."

Nowt wrong with that – they're both over 21. However, even less orthodox domestic scenarios are possible, as Will explains: "I like bizarre, and it turns out the way we do our characters we were able to very easily import *Quake* skins. I can download *Quake II* skins off the Net and they automatically appear in the character select screen. So I can have a family of *Quake II* characters. These guys are all zero personalities, they're not very pleasant, kicking the shit out of each other."

## HOME ALONE

Other downloadable items may include a football fully embedded with the rules of the game, and a funnel web spider which can escape and kill. As Will says: "I want to have a lot of weird, twisted things just like that in there."

So how much of *The Sims* is based on Will's own home life?

"Well, actually that's my favourite part. I can put my family in and my house in, because to me that's the really bizarre thing. I noticed a long time ago that with a lot of people who play *SimCity*, about a month later they're driving down the road and they're starting to notice, 'Oh, industrial zone'; 'Oh, new freeway...' They start to view their environment differently. That's a pretty common thing with *SimCity*. But with this game, I've been playing it a lot, so now I go home and I'm starting to think, 'Hunger: negative 20'; and then I see my wife and it's, 'Hug or kiss? Hug or kiss?' It's funny, it makes you see your whole life differently. You're playing this real-time strategy version of your life, and also you start thinking of your everyday life as a real-time strategy game."

Now that is twisted. **[X]**

**"I can download *Quake II* skins off the Net and they automatically appear in the character select screen. So I can have a family of *Quake II* characters"**

more E3 appearances than the average freeloading journalist.

## SIMAGOTCHI

As the overseer of a neighbourhood of Sims, their lives are effectively in your hands. A predefined selection of Sims is provided, or you can customise your Sims' personalities, skills and careers to create your own unique family. The idea is to help them find happiness or, alternatively, plunge them into a moribund existence of bitterness and despair. For want of a media-friendly soundbite, it's *SimCity* meets Tamagotchi.

They need something a little more salubrious than a keyring to live in though, and homes for your Sims can either be bought, or designed yourself. In fact, the game began its life as an architecture program. It's developed a long way since then though, and the homes can be equipped with furniture, electronics, plumbing, lighting and other accessories necessary to keep your Sims happy. Once housed, Sims can interact with

game about people, think it's a scripted adventure game. And I really don't want people to get the wrong impression, because in fact it's an extremely open-ended simulation. In fact it's probably a lot more open-ended than *SimCity*. It's more like a chemistry set or something."

Relationships clearly play an important part in the game, but could Bob move in with Ted, for instance? "That was a minefield that we trod ever so carefully, but in fact you can establish homosexual relationships in the game. Men can fall in love with







## WILL WRIGHT



Chief designer and co-founder of Maxis, Will has been directly involved with SimCity, SimCity 2000, SimEarth, SimAnt and SimCopter

**PCZ** What's the first game you ever played?

**WILL** The first stand-up thing I played was *Space Warrior*, in the big old fibreglass cabinet. The first computer game was Bruce Artwick's very first flight simulator, which was wireframe graphics on the Apple II. It was so cool.

**PCZ** What's the best game you've ever played?

**WILL** I hate to say it, but I guess I have to say it's *Zelda*. No question.

**PCZ** What's the last game you bought?

**WILL** *X-Wing Alliance*.

**PCZ** Have you ever been in a fight, and if so what happened?

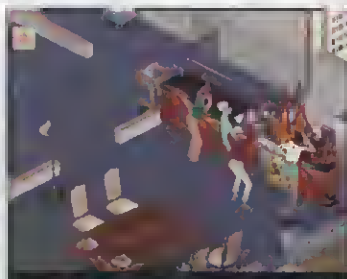
**WILL** A fight? You mean personally? Ooh, that's a weird one. A physical fight? Not really. Er, in my whole life? No, not really, except, you know, wrestling with friends and stuff, which got serious a couple of times. When I was a teenager, we were wrestling at a bar and one of my other friends had the great idea of handing me this giant Bowie knife, and I almost sliced his thumb off. It was really nothing.



Two girls for every guy...



Invite the neighbours over for a barbecue.



Disasters can occur, like this chip pan fire.



Someone's been to World Of Leather.



"Ooh, give us a rub-down with that chip fat."



Each house is a save game, so your other save games actually become your neighbours.



A swift game of pool, or a dip in the jacuzzi. You decide.



The Sims: nobody ages, and you can shag your neighbours.



Any similarity to *The Simpsons* is purely coincidental.

# The best a man can get...

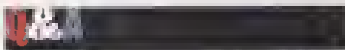
# BLADE

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Rebel Act Studios  
**PUBLISHER** Gremlin  
**WEBSITE** [www.rebelact.com](http://www.rebelact.com)  
**OUT** November

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- The best lighting we've ever seen
- Role-playing with a proper 3D engine
- Level editing package to be included
- Goblin-free



## JAVIER CORTIJO



*We asked the project manager at Rebel Act Studios to answer a few questions*

**PCZ** What's the first game you ever played?

**JAVIER** *The Maze Of Calius* and *Conan* (on the Apple IIe). Haven't things changed?

**PCZ** What's the last game you paid money for?

**JAVIER** *Half-Life*. It's obviously not the last game I've played, but it was very hard to get a go on the company copy. We've learned a lot from it.

**PCZ** What's your favourite game of all time?

**JAVIER** It's very difficult to choose: *Castlevania 4* (Nintendo), *Doom* (the original – there was a certain sense of, "Oh my god, have you seen this?") and *Metal Gear Solid*. We're sure *Blade* will be up there when it's finished.

**PCZ** Have you ever been in a fight, and if so what happened?

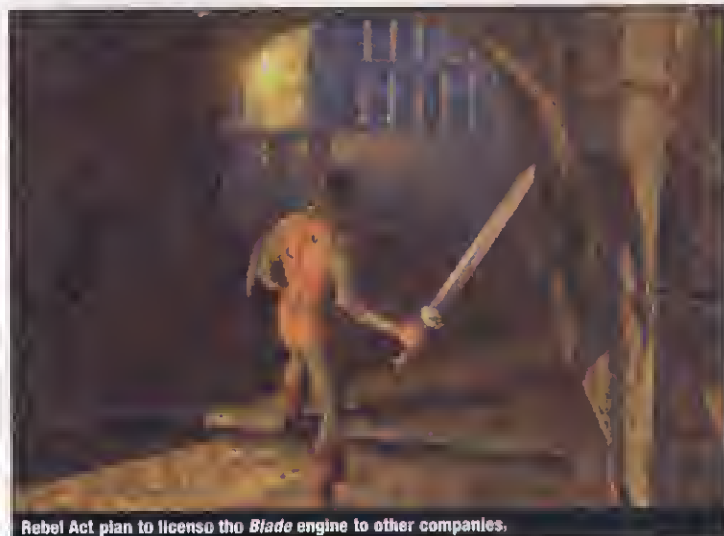
**JAVIER** Yes, and thanks to playing first-person shooters we'd gained the same level of training as US Marines. We shot them in the face and strafed-jumped away.

Gremlin's new hack-and-slash 'em up has made **Paul Mallinson** see the light

**S** huffling from booth to booth at the recent Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles with my trusty right-hand man Steve Hill, I noticed that the majority of 3D-accelerated games were starting to look alike: same sort of colour schemes, same sort of anti-aliasing, same sort of lighting effects. Sure, there were great games underneath some of them – and we look forward to playing them – but we were looking for something more. Something better. Something to take us into the next millennium.

Little did we know that there was a treat in store away from the ritual bombardment of dance music and thrash metal being pumped out in the three main exhibition halls. UK-based Gremlin Interactive were showing off their games in a more sedate atmosphere, a relaxing haven that gave us ample opportunity to play *Blade*, which must have been by far the best-looking game of the entire show.

We've had our eye on *Blade* for some time now – you'll no doubt have noticed us bleating on from time to time about how excited we are about it. Rebel Act Studios, the Spanish-based developers, have been hard at work on their first ever game, and their fully-interactive 3D action adventure now bristles with more amazing graphical effects than ever seen before, or likely to be seen for some time. It's so lush, visually, that it makes us wonder what the *Ion Storms*, *iDs* and *Epics* of this world have been up to. The game really does look that good.



Rebel Act plan to license the *Blade* engine to other companies.

## POWERHOUSE OF AN ENGINE

At the base of it all is *Blade*, Rebel Act's proprietary 3D engine. Not only does this marvellous piece of software generate the best lighting effects our eyes have ever been treated to, it also makes everything that moves in the game look incredibly true to life. In fact, realism is the key. Everything – from the near-perfect water ripple effect to the way a chair breaks into splinters when you twat it with a sword – looks so realistic. The boffins at Rebel Act have no doubt been burning the midnight oil – and it shows.

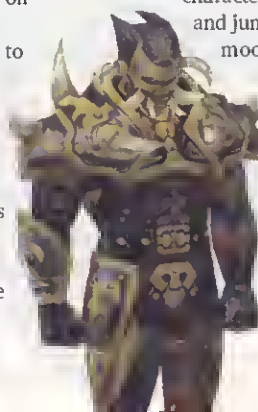
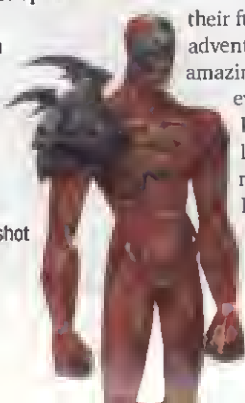
Personally, I've yet to see better lighting – the way shadows fall and move had us all gasping; a torch thrown to the floor, casting huge shadows around it, made us weep with joy. Apparently this is due

to using 'light volumes' rather than 'shadow maps'. We're not entirely sure what they mean by that, but take it from us it worked – amazingly well.

## QUADRUPLE-EDGED SWORD

Unlike most third-person hack-and-slash action games, *Blade* won't be going overboard on the weapons side of things, but will offer a selection of characters to play out the adventure, each with their own characteristics and skills (see Choose Your Warrior panel). To progress in the story, your character has to fight, swim, climb and jump through some pretty moody scenery. Apparently there will also be people to talk to along the way, although this wasn't evident in the version we were shown.

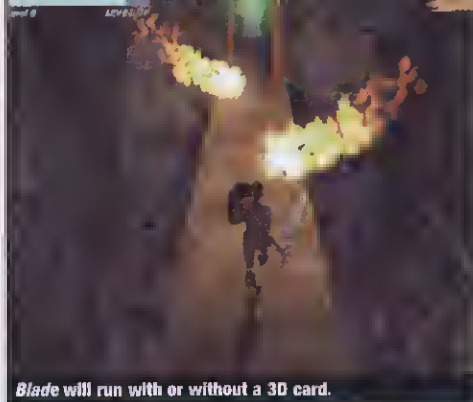
The action looks very gritty, with amputations and decapitations galore, and appears authentic even down to the way the blood







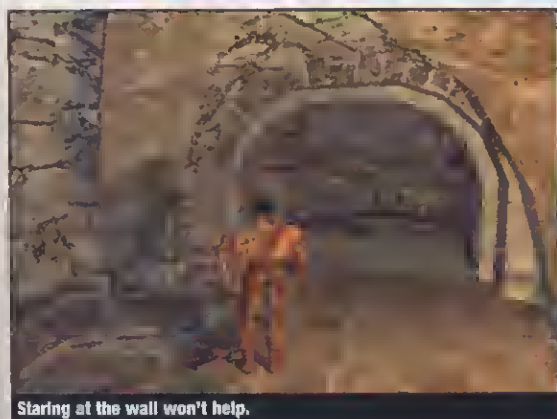
The environments are intricately modelled.



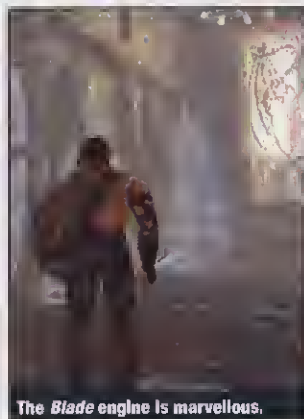
Blade will run with or without a 3D card.



The water ripples when you walk through it. Brilliant.



Staring at the wall won't help.



The Blade engine is marvellous.



One of the realistic physics-based puzzles.



There are lots of different enemies, each with different AI.



It's so luscious, visually, that it makes us wonder what the Ion Storms, iDs and Epics of this world have been up to

Shock horror! Short, fat, hairy man on murderous rampage.

drips on to the walls and floors. A unique targeting system also seems to help – when fighting a group of men, you can cycle through them as individual targets and always face the one you'd selected.

But it's not all just fighting, there are some fiendish 'physics-based puzzles' too. The ones we saw looked like something out of *The Crystal Maze* – pulling ropes, lifting planks and so on, all of which looked well designed.

#### ORCS, BUT NO GOBLINS

But Steve Hill, being the cynic that he is, wasn't completely convinced by *Blade*. "Goblins," he hissed. But Gremlin have promised that there won't be any in *Blade*. Having said that, upon our return to Blighty

(and a little more research), we did uncover the fact that the game will feature orcs. Which is just as bad. But we're joking, of course. *Blade* looks gobsmacking, and could achieve what *Die By The Sword* (PCZ #64, 75%) and *Deathtrap Dungeon* (PCZ #65, 70%) failed to – a PC ZONE Classic award.

With a release date set for November, *Blade*'s designers have plenty of time to fine-tune and add all those clever little touches that make us glow on the inside. I've already seen the light: *Blade* demonstrates that the future of 3D graphics still has much to offer, and that eventually all games will look this way.

Rebel Act want to license their engine to other companies. And if it's as easy to use and as flexible as they claim, we could be looking at *World Domination*. You've been warned. **PCZ**



## CHOOSE YOUR WARRIOR

First things first: pick which one of the four different characters you want to play as

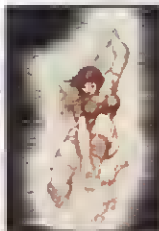
#### KNIGHT

Square jaw, heavy suit of armour. The rocky road of valour and honour is paved with the blood of a thousand souls, none of which managed to score a hit.



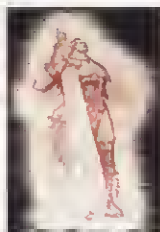
#### AMAZON

Agile and buxom, the Amazon woman can crush a man with her thighs, and smother him with her bosom (we hope).



#### BARBARIAN

The biggest sword in the land, the tightest muscles, the bravest heart... The Barbarian's strength and quick reflexes are his greatest assets.



#### DWARF

This little guy proves that it's not height that counts, it's girth. Dwarves are apparently immune to poisonous beverages.





Shaken, not stirred.



Drive like that on a public highway and you'd deserve to be called a raving maniac.



Up close and personal with the arse end of a rally car.

# Hot Swedish action... RALLY

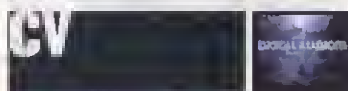
Move over, Colin McRae, there's a new cock in the roost.

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Digital Illusions  
**PUBLISHER** Gremlin Interactive  
**WEBSITE** [www.rallymasters.com](http://www.rallymasters.com)  
**OUT** October

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's from the makers of *Motorhead*
- ★ It covers every type of rally driving
- ★ It features 51 unique tracks
- ★ It looks great



## DIGITAL ILLUSIONS

Here's a look at their key PC releases

**1992** *Pinball Dreams* sets the ball rolling.

**1992** *Pinball Fantasies* keeps the ball rolling some more.

**1996** *Pinball Illusions* is probably the best 2D pinball game on the PC.

**1997** *S40 Racing*. Commissioned by Volvo to promote their racing team. Never seen it.

**1998** *Motorhead* (PCZ #63, 90%) does the business in a futuristic stylee.

**R**emember *Motorhead*? No, not the grizzled rockers, you fool, the futuristic racing game. Of course you do. Arriving in the office with little more than a polite nod, it soon had us hooked with its extravagant visuals and frightening speed, moving like the proverbial shit off a shovel.

The point? The point is that the same blokes who typed in *Motorhead* (PCZ #63, 90%) are currently busy on their next vehicular extravaganza, *Rally Masters*. Those blokes are Gothenburg-based developers Digital Illusions, and their head honcho Fredrik Liliegren spoke to *PC ZONE* about the game. We asked him what they were hoping to achieve, and he told us: "We set out to do what we felt was the complete rally experience. Any type of rally you can imagine, we wanted to do in the game."

Okay, what about the Michelin Race of Champions, the post-season championship which takes place annually in Gran Canaria, whereby two drivers go head to head on

parallel tracks that switch over at one point, Scalextric-style? It's in there? With a licence? Cool. What else?

"We said: 'Okay, what other competitors are out there.' We have *Colin McRae*, so we took the VRC-style stretch runs and built a championship around that. There's *V-Rally* on PlayStation, which has four cars on the track at the same time, kind of rally cross-style, so we're doing a

simulated. I mean the car routine - the physics is as close as real can be without it being too hard for an average games player to play the game. In those modes where you should be able to, you can switch tyres and settings and repair your car, and there will be car damage and stuff like that. But in the *Rally Masters* event, because the drivers drive the same car, you don't really get to fiddle with

**“With 368 different track variations, all the big names from the world of rally, plus over 60 different cars, this is going to be a seriously large game”**

championship around that. And then there's *Sega Rally Arcade* - people like that, so we'll do one of those as well. So we have basically four different ways to play the game. It's the complete rally experience. There's no other way to play a rally in real life, and they're all in the game."

## SIMULATION STREET

So will it err towards either arcade, or simulation tomfoolery?

"The *Rally Masters* special stages are

anything, because the cars have to be similar."

What types of cars are there?

"Every single car you can think of, from the new Peugeot 306, the Ford Focus, down to the old ones that you've seen from the old times; monster cars, group B cars which were banned because they were too dangerous - we've got them all in there. We've got some specials as well - Mini Coopers. Anything that we feel is cool."





Grab some phat air in the game they're all calling *Rally Masters*.



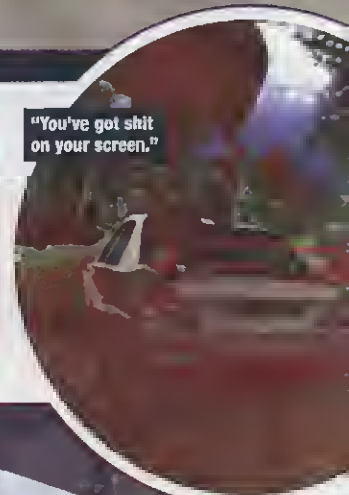
Get over!



Fill her up, Cliff.

# MASTERS

"You've got shit on your screen."



## Steve Hill takes a firm grip of the wheel

So you haven't just taken the *Motorhead* engine and written the words 'Rally Masters' on in crayon?

"On PC it's totally rewritten, because the old one was DX5. This one is DX6, and it will incorporate some parts of DX7 once that's released. It's an entirely new render engine, entirely new physics engine, so in essence it's a new game, but built on the experience from *Motorhead*."

### RALLY GOOD

What's so good about rallying anyway?

"I think rally is a very exciting way to play a driving game. F1 is okay, but rallying is more action, more stuff happening. I think it's the most fun of all driving sports to watch on TV, and most fun for people who can get into it. I mean, you can take your car out in the countryside and kind of rally on your own. It's hard to get into an F1 track and do that."

What about that perennial rally game bugbear 'invisible wall syndrome'?

"Obviously we have to have some limitations on where you can drive, otherwise there would be too much

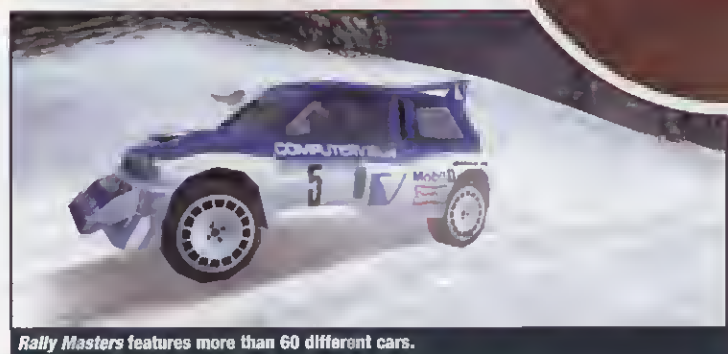
space taken up in memory, especially as we're doing PlayStation and N64 versions. But we'll try to build the tracks so that it's natural."

How many tracks are there?

"In total, throughout the championships there are going to be 51 unique tracks, and then you can race those backwards once you unlock certain secrets in the game. So that'll be 102. And then, you know, if we count weather and everything like that, it goes up."

It certainly does, and our crack team of mathematicians have calculated that including reverse, weather and day/night variants, this comes to 368. Which is a lot. With 368 different track variations, all the big names from the world of rally, plus over 60 different cars, this is going to be a seriously large game.

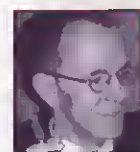
It's also shaping up to be pretty damn good, judging from the quick spin we had at E3, although we had to wait half an hour while a former French rally driver put the game through its paces. But if it's good enough for him, it's good enough for us. Bring it on. **PCZ**



*Rally Masters* features more than 60 different cars.



## FREDRIK LILIEGREN



The Chief Executive Officer (aka head honcho) of Digital Illusions speaks to us with his mouth

**PCZ** What's the first game you ever bought?

**FREDRIK** The first game I ever bought was *Rambo* for N64.

**PCZ** The first game you ever bought was for the N64?

**FREDRIK** No, no, sorry, *Rambo* for C64. Sorry, wrong 64.

**PCZ** What's the best game you've ever played?

**FREDRIK** *Banjo-Kazooie* for N64.

**PCZ** What's the last game you paid money for?

**FREDRIK** *Zelda 64*.

**PCZ** Have you ever been in a fight, and if so what happened?

**FREDRIK** When I was loads younger I hit somebody on the cheek, and it probably hurt more in my hand than on his cheek. So I went home and cried.

**PCZ** You haven't bothered since?

**FREDRIK** No. I'm not a fighting guy.

THE INTERNET

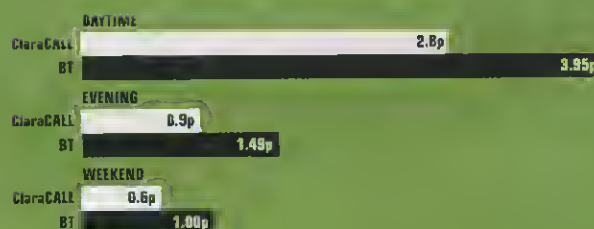
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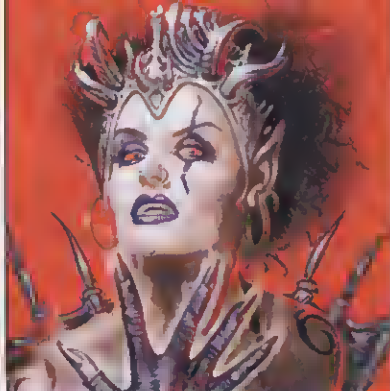
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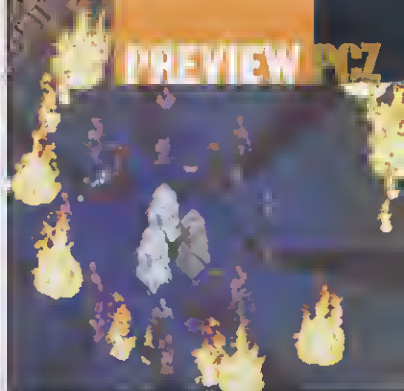




There's a mixture of fixed maps and randomly generated ones.



The evil Hecubah, a necromancer in dire need of a manicure or makeover, we're not sure which.



These aren't long shadows, they're statues blocking your vision.



The shallowness of the sword, or the strategic depth of magic? You decide.

# NOX



There's an epic story in here somewhere. Isn't there always?



A lake of fire is perfect for keeping your hut warm.

An RPG with spells, bells and whistles? **Mark Hill** casts an eye over Westwood's answer to *Diablo II*

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Westwood Studios  
**PUBLISHER** Westwood Studios  
**WEBSITE** [www.westwood.com](http://www.westwood.com)  
**DUT** Winter

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ✦ It's the latest game from hit factory Westwood
- ✦ Combines the depth of RPGs with the instant action of arcade shooters
- ✦ True line of sight system
- ✦ You can set up magical traps

## FIRST ENCOUNTER

or a wizard, and while you can hack your way through walls of flesh and slash curtains of skin to bloody ribbons, the real meat of the game is to be found in the use of magic.

There are more than 100 spells to learn, which can then be combined in any way you like to set traps. This

so you can take into account the kind of environment you're setting it in and what effects you want it to have. Of course, some of the more satisfying moments in *Half-Life* involve setting up trap bombs with laser wires for soldiers to trigger off. Hopefully *Nox* will recreate the smugness you feel when you find your enemies' bones scattered around the corner. In fact the satisfaction should be greater, as the combos will be of your own making.

The executive producer of *Nox*, John Hight, gave us an example of one of these snares, which you could load with Fumble, Confuse and

how to move in the right direction (Confuse), and is blasted by a fireball." You can imagine the possibilities...

Another important feature is the incorporation of a true line of sight system. This means that if something is blocking your vision, you can't see behind it and therefore don't know what's in store for you. Looking through a window gives you a glimpse of what there is in the room, while the darkness uncovers gradually as you open a door. A very cool idea, and one we're surprised no one has thought of before.

All this should ensure that *Nox* really comes to life as a multiplayer game. But for those of you without friends or a Web connection, there are plenty of places to explore, NPCs to interact with and quests to embark on. You can also expect a ridiculously high level of interaction with your environment, and the chance to develop your own customised wizard or warrior.

Look out for a preview of *Nox* in *PC ZONE* soon. **PCZ**

**"Each trap can be a combination of three spells, so you can take into account the kind of environment you're setting it in and what effects you want it to have"**

promises to be one of the game's highlights, as you wander the three lands of *Nox* sneaking around the scenery and preparing magical ambushes. Each trap can be a combination of up to three spells,

Fireball spells: "You can place it inside a doorway, or right next to a bottle of healing potion. Your opponent shows up, goes for the potion, steps on the trap, and bang! He's now dropped all his items (Fumble), can't figure out

**L**urking in the shadows of Westwood's eagerly anticipated and much delayed *Tiberian Sun* is the arcade RPG *Nox*. A quick glance at the screenshots will tell you that, like *Diablo* and *Baldur's Gate*, it favours the top-down view. We can report that it's shaping up closer to the former's action-oriented gameplay than the latter's traditional AD&D approach, although *Nox*'s emphasis on die-hard fantasy is bound to appeal to hard-core RPGers.

Allow us to explain. You have the choice of becoming a warrior, a mage



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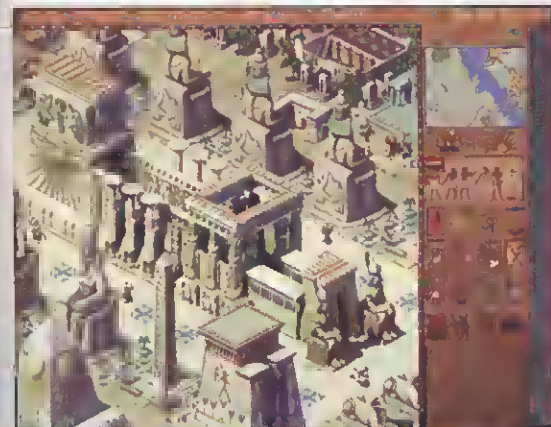


That'll be one of them there pyramids. Or at least it will when it's finished.



Naval warfare plays its part, so you're probably going to need some boats.

Farming on the banks of the Nile presents some unique hazards.



Not your traditional Arndale centre, by any means.



The Sphinx - half woman, half cat. Strange lot, the Egyptians.



The traditional cut-scenes will abound. Come on, you idle twats!

# PHARAOH

The *Caesar III* team relocate to Egypt. Steve Hill takes a night boat to Cairo (of course he doesn't)

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Impressions  
**PUBLISHER** Sierra  
**WEBSITE** [www.sierrastudios.com](http://www.sierrastudios.com)  
**OUT** Autumn

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's from the makers of the *Caesar* series
- It's a whole new scenario
- You get to boss slaves around
- There might be some treasure

The excellent *Caesar III* (PCZ #70, 92%) proved to be one of the creepier hits of last year, reducing at least one member of the ZONE team to a husk, and racking up an impressive 400,000 sales in the process. In the current climate, the obvious thing to do next would be to change a couple of typefaces, redesign the box and call it *Caesar IV*. However, veteran developers Impressions have decided not to go down that route (not yet,

## FIRST ENCOUNTER

anyway), and have spent the interim period slaving away on the forthcoming *Pharaoh*, pictures of which adorn this page for your visual stimulation.

**"Building pyramids plays a big part, as does harnessing the power of the Nile, with seasonal flooding adversely affecting the daily routines of the local inhabitants"**

Have you had a look? What sort of game do you think it is, then? A first-person shooter? A future sport simulation? Of course not. Impressions make real-time strategy games, and *Pharaoh* should slot

comfortably into their highly successful city-building series. Set in ancient Egypt (as you might have guessed) during the period when the great pyramids were built, this city simulation game enables you to create majestic Egyptian cities, build large monuments, and farm at the mercy of the Nile River.

Set in Old, Middle and New Kingdom Egypt, the game spans the period from 2900 to 700 BC, and the campaigns correspond roughly to the historical ages. Building pyramids

clearly plays a big part, as does harnessing the power of the Nile, with seasonal flooding adversely affecting the daily routines of the local inhabitants. Those inhabitants include dancers, jugglers, papyrus

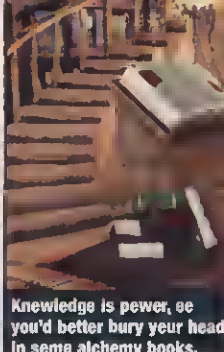
makers, hunters and embalmers, all adding to the rich tapestry of Egyptian life, and all at your mercy. Primitive villages can be built into thriving metropolises, or your poorly managed city can be pillaged or burnt to the ground. Manage it well and ultimately the greatest Egyptian structures will be built in your honour. Which is nice.

*Pharaoh* claims to include many features never seen before in a city-building series game, including a farming model based on the flooding of the Nile, naval warfare, giant monuments that are assembled over time, and a unique dynastic progression. It looks great, but if all they've done is throw a few sphinxes into the *Caesar III* engine then there'll be uproar among the masses, or at least some embittered grumbling by a clutch of angry loners. Impressions are not known for cocking things up though, so for now we'll give them the benefit of the doubt. Bring it on. [M]

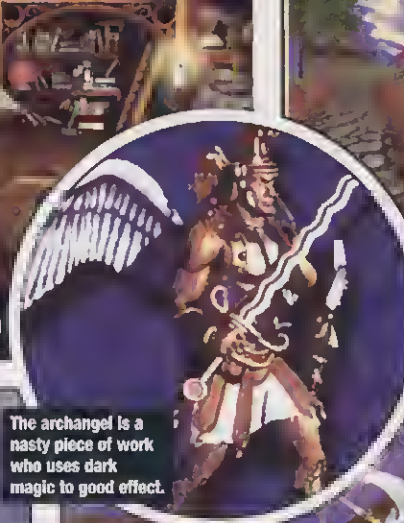




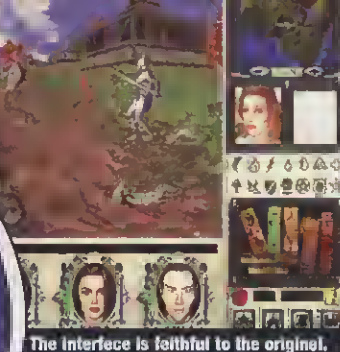
It's reminiscent of *Dungeon Master*, the granddaddy of them all.



Knowledge is power, as you'd better bury your head in some alchemy books.



The archangel is a nasty piece of work who uses dark magic to good effect.



The interface is faithful to the original.



I can recommend a dentist to sort out that decay, but you'll need a vet to clip these wings.



The locals stagger home after another night on the tiles.

# MIGHT AND MAGIC VII

## FIRST ENCOUNTER

### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** 3DO  
**PUBLISHER** Ubi Soft  
**WEBSITE** [www.ubisoft.com](http://www.ubisoft.com)  
**OUT** Late 1999

### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's got a decent 3D engine, and is finally looking as good as it plays
- ★ The plot is as engaging as ever
- ★ Novices are well looked after
- ★ There's a great range of new spells, characters and monsters

The previous instalment of this long-running RPG series, *Might And Magic VI* (PCZ #66, 59%), was let down by a poor software-only graphics engine and patchy animation. It was also considered far too challenging for novice role-players, proving inaccessible to all but seasoned campaign veterans. However, despite its shortcomings, those who persevered were gripped by the cunning multi-layered plot of regal deception and intrigue.

**Dungeons and dragons, might and magic – it's all in a day's work for our resident knight in shining armour, Craig Vaughan**

For the uninitiated, the latest in the series is set in the war-torn mystical land of Erathia. Leading a band of four adventurers, your quest is to amass wealth and, perhaps more nobly, restore peace to your homeland. Those fearing another shoddy-looking affair need only look at the screenshots to realise that Ubi Soft have addressed all the previous incarnation's visual shortcomings – they've added full 3D support, tidied up the animation and dramatically increased the frame rate.

But it's not just the graphical overhaul that's impressive; throwing off the restrictions of the dated prequel, you're offered a more diverse range of characters to add to your team, including elves, dwarfs, orcs and human combatants. This time, careful team selection will pay dividends because each character has their own allegiances and personal agenda, meaning that their personalities develop uniquely as the plot unfolds.

As a result, individual team members are as likely to be ruthless (handy when it comes to fisticuffs and spell-casting) as approachable and friendly (essential for gleaning information from locals, and for trading purposes), so a good balance

of character traits and physical attributes will be required to produce an effective team.

Unlike the unforgiving prequel, you're eased into the action by being cast initially in the role of team "overseer" – a temporary but reassuring way to start your quest

**"In addition to the elemental spells and those that disrupt the mind and body there's a superb range of 'light magic' and some devilishly dark magic"**

which keeps you abreast of developments but detached from the immediacy of character control. Once familiar with your surroundings, you're led through the story by a series of advisors and cut-scenes which develop the plot, so although those who completed the previous quest will have an advantage (the plot background, game interface and 'feel' are all retained), new travellers to the land of Erathia will soon feel at home. That's not to say that the locals will go out of their way to make you

welcome, because the best you can hope for is that if you ignore them they'll leave you alone. That ploy won't work for long though, because interaction is necessary in order to acquire tools, food, weapons and other equipment, and if diplomacy fails spell-based combat skills will be essential.

Thankfully, you won't have to rely solely on potions based on the four elements of nature – earth, air, fire and water – for survival, as in addition to the elemental spells and those that disrupt the mind and body, there's a superb range of 'light magic' (including lightning bolts, paralysis potions, invulnerability and 'attack all' spells) and some devilishly dark magic (such as sacrificing opponents, destroying souls, reanimating the dead and creating havoc by shrinking combatants). This means that even novice alchemists should find a potion or two in their armoury with which to take on the legions of new monsters on offer.

Although the game is some way from completion, it looks like Ubi Soft have cast a very powerful spell of their own over this offering, and it could be that they're about to produce a game that finally delivers on the promises of its predecessors. **[W]**



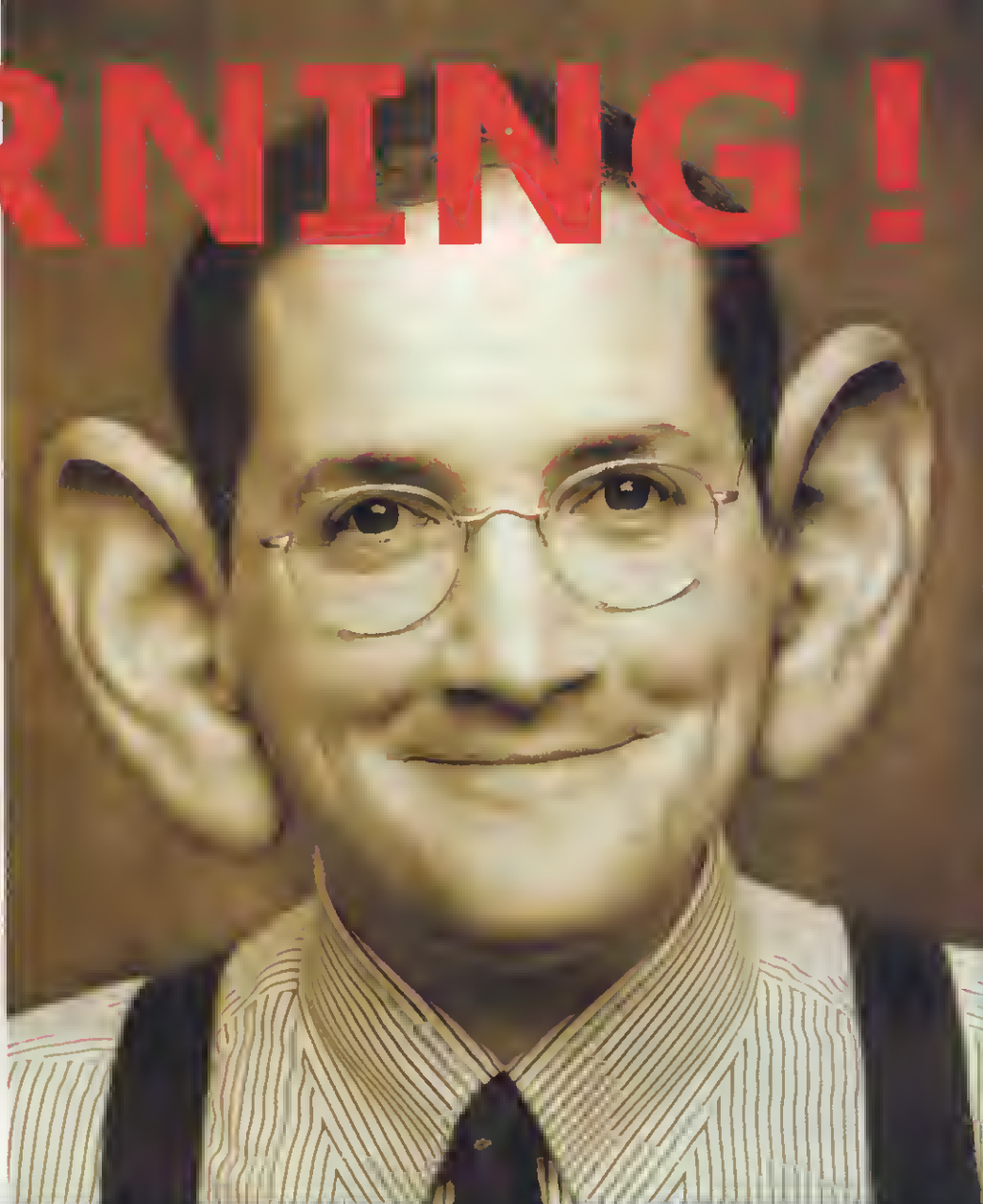
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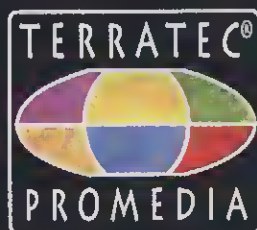


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FIRST  
ENCOUNTER

## FREESPACE 2

With improved visuals, frenzied dogfights and new multiplayer features, *FreeSpace* fans are in for a treat, reckons *Phil Wand*

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Volition Inc  
**PUBLISHER** Interplay  
**WEBSITE** www.freespace2.com  
**OUT** Winter

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Single and multiplayer missions plus team-based play
- Support for eight-player LAN and Internet games
- TCP/IP server and mission editor provided
- 70 different ships, some ten times the size of the superdestroyer in the previous game

**D**escribed by its detractors as a *Wing Commander* rip-off with me-too gameplay and a clichéd plot, *Conflict FreeSpace: The Great War* (PCZ #66, 89%) still managed to rack up all sorts of top scores and awards, and many websites voted the game Best Space Combat Sim of 1998.

Why all this fuss, then, if it's just another *WC* clone? Well, in the same way that *Carmageddon* wooed punters with gaggles of shrieking pedestrians, *FreeSpace* laid on a banquet of varied missions, a rich

interface, intelligent enemies and dazzling special effects. In short, it gave space combat fans everything they wanted.

Both the old game and the new one centre around the conflict between three races: the Terrans, the Vasudans and the Shivans. Right back at the start of things, the Terrans were fighting the Vasudans; they soon kissed and made up when the fearsome Shivans arrived to kill everyone. Now, some 32 years later, the Galactic Terran Vasudan Alliance is still in place, but the Shivans are back. Gulp!

You join the game as part of the Alliance and are sent to monitor the civil wars still raging in far-reaching corners of Terran space. The missions are just as varied and engaging as before, and there are now some 70 ships of varying class and size on offer. Some ships specialise in close combat and dogfighting, others are hi-tech bombers designed to take on the giant capital ships.

Volition, the game's developers, seem to be well aware of what made

the original title so successful. The man at the helm of the company, Mike Kulas, was one of the boffins behind the chart-topping *Descent* series and knows exactly what features are needed to sell games. Which is of course good news for the people who buy them.

*FreeSpace 2* (a more imaginative title has yet to surface) now has heavier emphasis on the deathmatch/co-op multiplayer side,

As you can see from the screenshots, ships now float gracefully in and out of huge, colourful gas clouds, and become susceptible to electromagnetic damage in the process. This adds to the strategy, as not only will you be hidden out of sight, but sensors will also be out of action, putting you in an ideal position from which to launch an ambush.

To help secure the success of

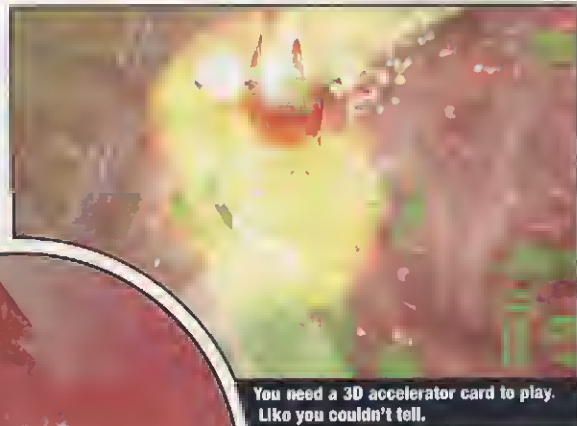
“Some ships specialise in close combat and dogfighting, others are hi-tech bombers designed to take on the big capital ships”

with all-new missions, network options, bundled TCP/IP server and team-based games. Popular aspects of the previous version, such as live audio communication and *Duke Nukem*-style taunts, are bolstered by smarter wingmen and FRED 2, the *FreeSpace* mission editor. The big capital ships are also able to defend themselves with new beam weaponry and flak cannons.

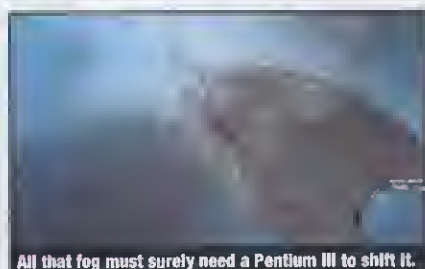
*FreeSpace 2* as an Internet game, Parallax Online will be supporting it as part of their online gaming library at [www.pxo.net](http://www.pxo.net). Together with nifty-sounding network features such as Squad Wars, where squadrons challenge one another for control of galactic territories, Volition look like making the thousands of existing *FreeSpace* players extremely happy indeed. [PC]



One of the capital class ships looms out of a nebula. Run away!



You need a 3D accelerator card to play. Like you couldn't tell.



All that fog must surely need a Pentium III to shift it.



What's this lurking in the deep?



As you can see, there are some *seriously* big ships in this game.



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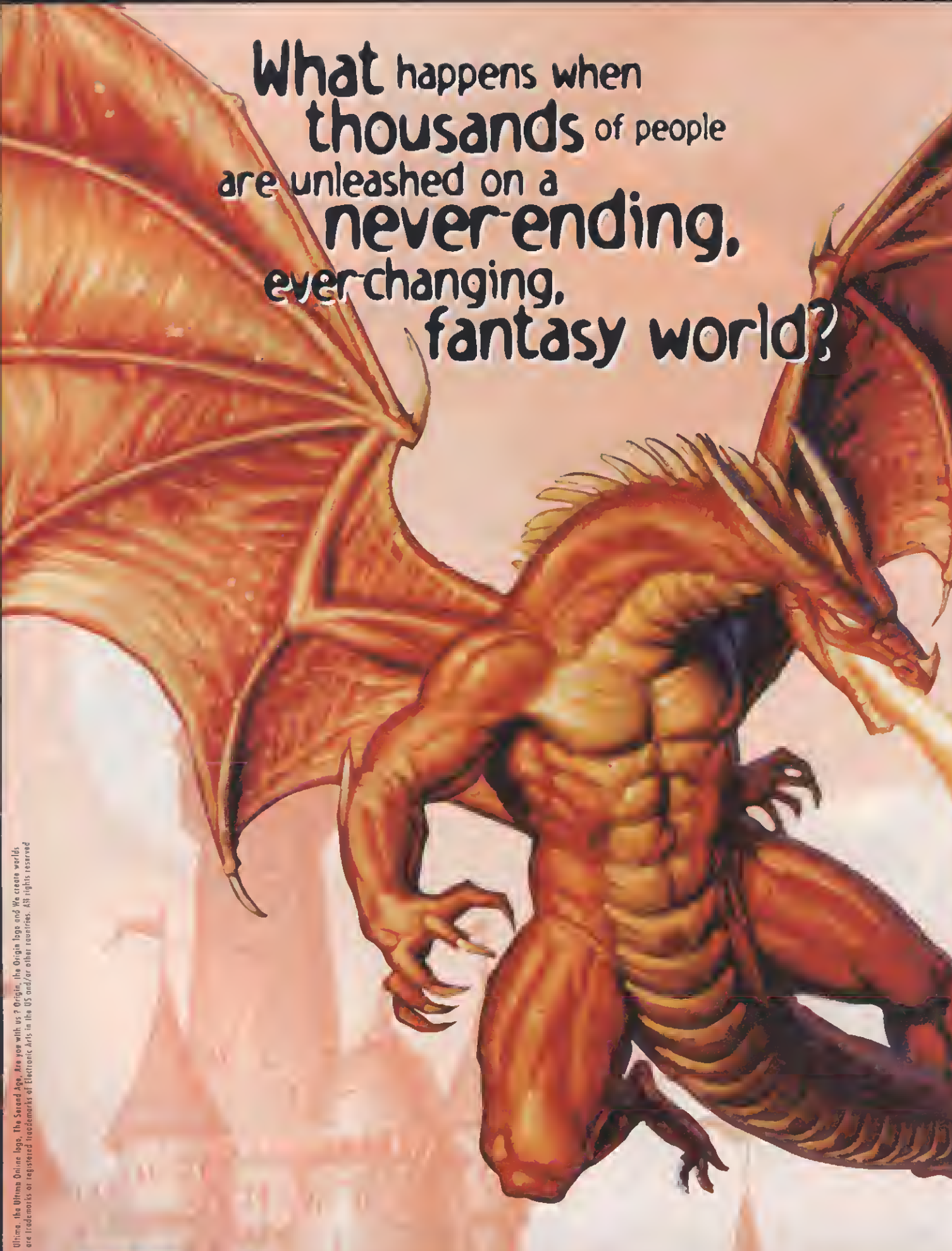
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INTERNET CONNECTION REQUIRED TO PLAY

# OBSESSED

WITH

# TOTAL CON

Some folk spend years creating the ideal *Quake*-style graphics engine. Others go with an existing one and focus purely on gameplay – it's worked wonders for game gods Valve Software. And it's working out rather nicely for a war-mongering skool kid from 'oop North as well

WORDS Adam Phillips

It had to be the most terrifying job in the world. Imagine sitting there and waiting for the order to 'go over the top'. No, not in the 'let's drink 12 pints, vomit heavily, fall over and then pass out' tradition of 'over the top', but leaping out of a trench with only a rifle and bayonet and tearing across no-man's land into

a hail of German bullets. While the current 'remote-controlled' conflict in the Balkans could potentially lead to the loss of many Brit troops' lives, back during the first and second world wars, casualties were expected – on an appalling scale.

While the reality was grim, the heroism of our soldiers back then still captivates us today. Judging from the success of Hollywood classics such as the gung-ho *The Great Escape* to the mind-numbing horrors of *Saving Private Ryan*, it's clear that we, the public, still hold such times in horrified awe. Times when people would have died for their country just to have had the chance to squeeze off a bullet at Hitler and his minions and stop them steamrolling across Europe leaving a path of genocide and destruction in their wake.

Such heroics have captured the imaginations of gamers as well. *Commandos* stayed at the top of the UK charts for weeks as punters indulged in world war, a theme which also currently dominates the work of Jon Ellison and his colleagues. Jon may be a student fretting over his O Levels by day, but by night he's co-director of Borderline Studios ([www.contaminated.net/borderline/mods/rfront/](http://www.contaminated.net/borderline/mods/rfront/)), which boasts a team of 25-plus and specialises in creating total conversions – a process where you take an existing graphics engine, strip out the models, sound and levels and replace them with your own.

Since the arrival of *Doom*, the total conversion scene has taken off big-time, and Jon and his colleagues are the toast of the TC community at the moment, judging from online opinion. They have three total conversions all based around world wars in the pipeline, and Jon himself has been dabbling in programming for years, cutting his teeth on *Quake II*'s source code, DirectX and OpenGL. "I decided to take a break from trying

to code full games though, and work on a mod for an engine instead," he explains.

He subsequently met up with his now co-director Peter Lovell "when he used to own Land Of Eden (a *Black & White* fan site), and we started talking on the Internet".

Jon discovered that Peter had an idea for a total conversion based around a World War II scenario: "He was looking for a coder, and I was looking for a game to code, so we joined together. We then worked on the game idea at length, and set up Borderline Studios together to produce it."

The studio's first total conversion is the nearly completed *The Russian*

hooked on the idea of total conversions. "It took *Half-Life* to obsess me," he explains. "The game is amazing, and it's the first FPS I played through to the end. I still spend many nights on the Net playing it."

"When we started on *The Russian*

**"We try to help other mod teams and coders, as well as produce numerous products for the *Half-Life* engine"**

JON ELLISON, TOTALLY CONVERTED TO TOTAL CONVERSIONS

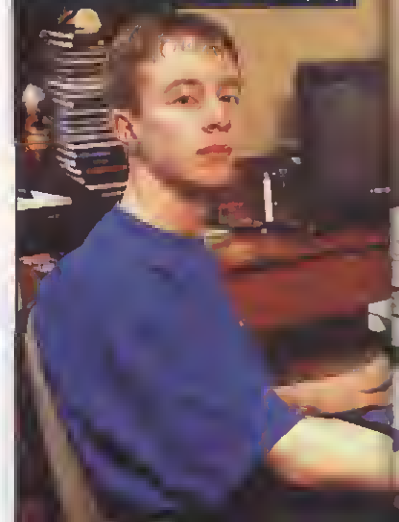
*Front* (see Jon's Army panel on page 65), which uses the *Half-Life* engine and boasts a development team of some 17 people. The lads are also managing two other projects that are in various stages of development: one is based around post-war Russian espionage; the other, *Suicide March*, enables you to take on the role of Blighty soldiers kicking German butt during WWI.

The size and scale of the projects and teams are another reflection of Jon's obsession. "None of us have ever met each other in person," he says. "We live all over the world. Every Friday we meet up in IRC, and during the week we normally get together and chat about the future and what we want to add to the game we're working on."

Ultimately though, Jon admits that it was *Half-Life* – and not the likes of *Saving Private Ryan* – that got him

*Front*, we realised that there were many creative people out there and thought it was a shame to waste such talent, so we set up Borderline. We try to help out other mod teams and coders as much as

Jon is only 16, but thanks to hard work he's now co-director of his own company!



## CASE HISTORY



### #15 THE TOTAL CONVERSION FANATIC

NAME Jon Ellison

AGE 16

LOCATION Tynemouth

OCCUPATION Student

OBSESSION Total conversions – taking an existing engine such as *Half-Life*'s and creating a new game round it

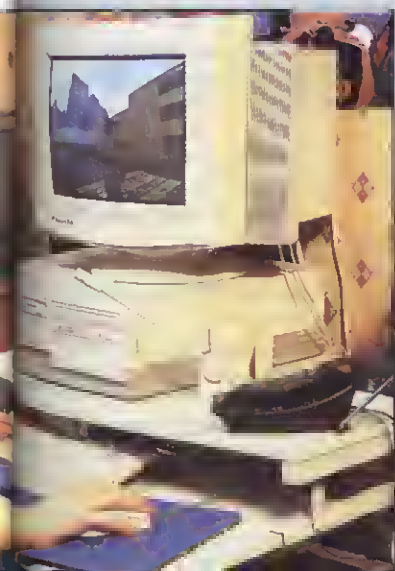
CONDITION BEGAN While Jon's dabbled in coding most of his life, it took *Half-Life* to bend his mind into the obsessive state it is today

HISTORY OF CONDICTION While only recently hooked, his obsession for TCs flared up with the speed of NHS super-bacteria infesting a septic sore. Now runs Borderline Studios with his mate Peter Lovell, and has three World War-based TCs on the way to a screen near you over the next year

OUTLOOK Valve love 'im. We love 'im. With such praise and his own ambition to become a pro games programmer, this can only be the beginning



# VERSIONS



## TOTAL CONTROL

To give you an idea of what can be achieved with total conversions, check out the following examples...

### TOTAL CONVERSION: WANTED!

Where to find it: [www.wantedq2.com/](http://www.wantedq2.com/)

Engine: Quake II

Story: Very Impressive Wild West TC featuring cowboys, Indians, six-shooters and new scenery.

Available: Demo out now



Yee hai Quake in the Wild West.



Six-shooters: as effective as railguns.

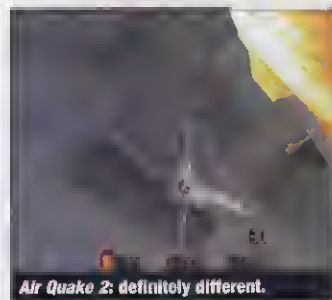
### TOTAL CONVERSION: AIR QUAKE 2

Where to find it: <http://airquake2.convertd2.com/>

Engine: Quake II

Story: Take to the skies and blow players out of the great blue yonder in an assortment of planes and helicopters. A novel twist on the usual TC.

Available: Out now



Air Quake 2: definitely different.



There's a selection of different aircraft.

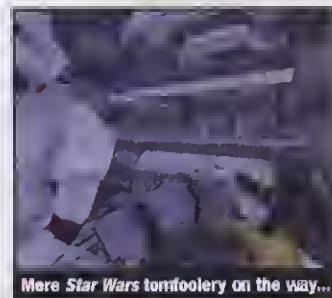
### TOTAL CONVERSION: STAR WARS TC

Where to find it: <http://swtc.telefragged.com/>

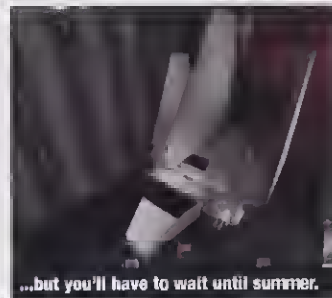
Engine: Quake II

Story: With everything now distinctly *Phantom Menace*-shaped, why not drool over this forthcoming home-grown effort featuring all your favourite *Star Wars* shenanigans?

Available: Out summer 99



Mere *Star Wars* tomfoolery on the way...



...but you'll have to wait until summer.

### TOTAL CONVERSION: THE DOWN

Where to find it: [www.hereitcl.com/theDown/](http://www.hereitcl.com/theDown/)

Engine: Heretic II

Story: While a long way from being completed, this TC adaptation of *Watership Down* exemplifies the kind of possibilities that the TC scene can offer.

Available: Still in development



Sorry, it's too misty to go rabbit-spotting.

possible, and endeavour to produce numerous different products for the *Half-Life* engine."

While certain PC puritans may shake their heads in disgust over Jon and co not coding their own engine, he's more than happy to stick to the team's current strategy: "To build a game up from the ground is a huge task, and it needs a very talented team who can work with each other closely. Creating a new graphics engine can take months of development.

"The beauty of a conversion is that you can work nearly as well even if you never meet the other guys on the team. The amount of programming is much smaller as the engine is already in place, and that enables you to concentrate on gameplay and adding those little extras in the code which make it even more fun to play."

But there are downsides. "The main disadvantage is that you're limited to what you can do," offers Jon. "Alright, it is possible to do a lot of stuff with *Half-Life*, but the opportunities aren't endless - it requires skill to delve into the code and manipulate it at a deep level."

The good news for Jon and his colleagues is that *Half-Life* developers Valve have been more than happy to

help out. Valve have already mentioned the team in their Internet radio interviews, and have been dishing out advice and support by the shedload. Borderline Studios were even invited to go along to E3 (*The largest annual show of computer games which takes place in Los Angeles - Ed*) with a demo, though unfortunately they couldn't make it because it wasn't completed in time. So whether you're an amateur or pro, it seems that some things never change.

With the likes of Valve more than willing to offer a helping hand, the TC scene is obviously here for the long haul. Perhaps more importantly though, whatever your particular game idea may be - whether it's slicing up a Nazi for Blighty, or beating a mutant alien into a bloody pulp - people now have the tools to bring their vision to the screen.

With team co-operation and determination, massive budgets aren't required. And perhaps - just perhaps - we're witnessing the beginnings of a return to home-grown games (albeit using existing technology) where enthusiasts can once again create their own games in front of their computer - instead of in a boardroom with a marketing team. [E]

## TC TIPS & TACTICS

While you don't need to spend months creating the perfect graphics engine, embarking on a total conversion is still a massive commitment that takes military-style planning and tears chunks out of your social life. Here Jon rustles up some tips that might make the beginner's path to TC glory a little smoother

### DO...

- ★ Come up with an original idea. Another mod set in a future world with nasty space monsters isn't exactly going to set the public's imagination alight.
- ★ Get a committed and talented team. Borderline have sourced fellow enthusiasts from the Net and have weekly meetings online to discuss progress. Mix it up with the people online via perusing game-specific chat areas or posting ads to the newsgroups. If you still can't find a team, don't worry - email Borderline and they'll have a look at your design docs.
- ★ Get a good Web page showing off your work. In most cases it'll be the first port of call for interested punters.
- ★ Take some screenshots so people can see how good your game is looking.
- ★ Listen to everyone: your team, the public and your friends. Taking feedback on board - without sticking your bottom lip out - is essential.
- ★ If you're managing a game's production, it's a good idea to get someone else to co-produce with you - if you can't make an online meeting, they can.
- ★ If you reckon your TC is good enough, drop *PC ZONE* a line - we'd love to take a look at it.

### DON'T...

- ★ Don't be too ambitious.
- ★ Don't go out there for the money, do it because you love doing it.
- ★ Don't try to get too much publicity before you've got a great Web page up - you want interested people to be able to follow up on the word-of-mouth buzz your work is generating.
- ★ Don't concentrate on a single area and expect it to make the TC amazing - eg: "Gee, those Nazi soldiers sure look spunky in their leather Gestapo gear, but the gameplay sucks."
- ★ Don't be afraid to ask for advice. The TC scene is generally a friendly one, so if you're stuck, go and ask somebody (see TLC TC panel on page 65).



## JON'S ARMY

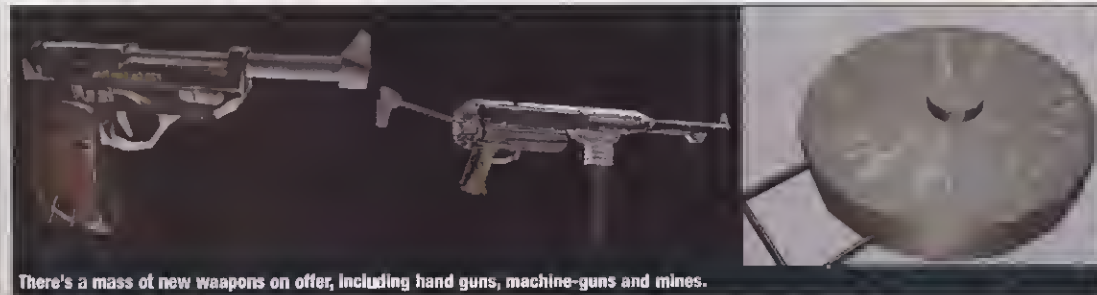
History buffs are going to have a field day – all three of Borderline's projects revolve round the World Wars, and the fruits of the team's labour look set to be blindingly good

### NAME: THE RUSSIAN FRONT

**Story:** Jump head-first into the conflict between Germany and Russia during World War II. While the actual conflict lasted four years, you can indulge in some of the key events by playing either the Germans or the Russians. Both single-player and multiplayer versions will be available.

**Specialities:** On-screen characters have hit areas: shoot someone in the head and they die instantly. Also, if you're shot in the chest you slowly bleed to death and need to find a medic to patch you up.

**Available:** Late summer



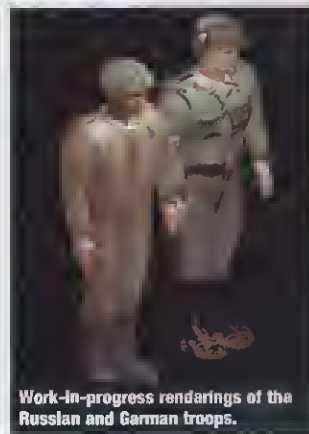
There's a mass of new weapons on offer, including hand guns, machine-guns and mines.



Lay waste to enemy tanks, or take out enemy gun posts in war-torn cities.



The Russian Front will also include major multiplayer operations. This screenshot is from the team's first alpha testing session – needless to say, it went well.



Work-in-progress renderings of the Russian and German troops.

### NAME: SECRETS OF WAR

**Story:** Based in postwar times, you play a Russian agent who must uncover Nazi military secrets to use for your country's own purposes. The missions are spread over a 15-year period and are set all over the world, from Eastern Europe to North Korea.

**Specialities:** Single-player only. You head teams who need to be issued with orders. Think *Rainbow Six* meets *Thief*.

**Available:** Beginning of next year

### NAME: SUICIDE MARCH

**Story:** The game places you on the simulated battlefields of Europe during WWI, fighting for either the Triple Entente (Britain, France, Russia) or the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy).

**Specialities:** You can play as various characters, ranging from machine-gunners and riflemen to saboteurs and snipers.

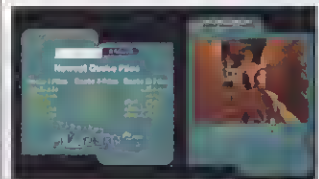
**Available:** Beginning of next year

# SUICIDE MARCH!



## TLC TC

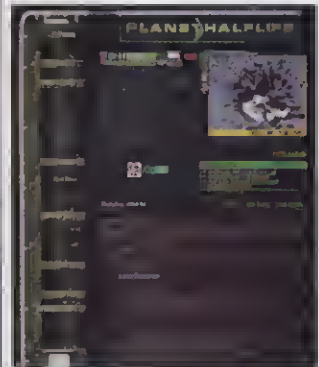
Feeling lost and confused? Don't know your mods from your models? Fret not, because the TC trailblazers below have amassed mountains of info the size of the Alps on all things total conversion. Here are some useful starting points...



### PLANET QUAKE

<http://planetquake.com/>

If you want to make the *Quake* engine the basis of your magnum opus, Planet Quake is the ultimate resource guide – from full-blown guides and info on the basics of TCs, to handy links and forums. If you need an answer, you can find it here – guaranteed.



### PLANET HALFLIFE

[www.planethalflife.com/](http://www.planethalflife.com/)

As with Planet Quake, the HL online posse are just as clued-up. Again, there are masses of articles and guides to get you going, and plenty of people to keep you motivated as more and more enthusiasts join the HL TC movement every week.



### JEDI NIGHTS

[www.jedinights.com/](http://www.jedinights.com/)

Heretic II

[www.hereticII.com](http://www.hereticII.com)

Neither are as impressive or anywhere near as comprehensive as Planet Quake or Planet HL, but they still offer contacts to get started if you want to use the JN or H2 engines. Be sure to check out the work-in-progress *Zelda 64* and *Metal Gear Solid* JN TCs.

# YOU'VE SEEN THE MOVIE, YOU KNOW THE LEGEND...

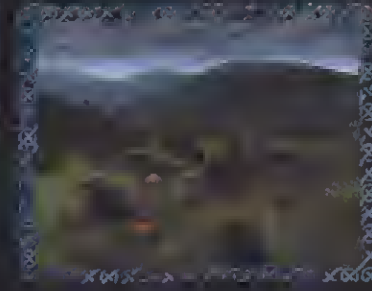


**"THEY MAY TAKE OUR LIVES,  
BUT THEY'LL NEVER TAKE  
OUR FREEDOM!"**

Based on Mel Gibson's award-winning movie, Braveheart the game recreates the atmosphere and excitement of Scotland's legendary struggle for freedom against the English invaders.

## KEY FEATURES

- Real-time Strategy and 3-D tactical combat.
- Trade, Diplomacy and Resource Management.
- Entire terrain of England and Scotland accurately recreated from Satellite data!
- Night and day battles, weather effects and seasonal variations.
- Epic battles in true 3D allowing you to fight at army level or close-in, man to man.
- Includes film footage and dialogue from the original film.



Braveheart TM & © 1995, 1998 Paramount Pictures and Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. © and Published by Eidos Interactive Limited 1999. All rights Reserved.

[www.eidos.com](http://www.eidos.com)

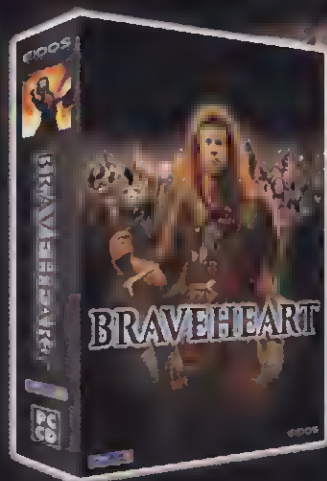




...NOW LIVE THE LIFE.

# BRAVEHEART™

"A RAMPAGING  
EPIC CAPABLE OF  
IMPASSIONING  
ANY GAMER"



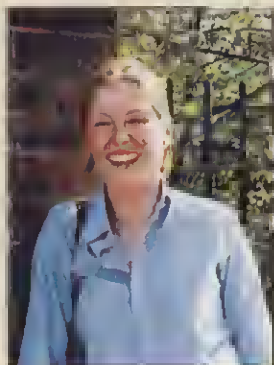
"ABSOLUTELY  
BREATH-taking"  
PC GAMING WORLD



# WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

This month, **ZONE** asks some of the fairer sex, all students, which games have been distracting them from their studies

WORDS Craig Vaughan & Heidi Woods PHOTOS Heidi Woods LOCATION Birmingham University



## KATHERINE DULLY

21, 3rd year Media Studies

**What's on your hard drive?**

*MDK, Duke Nukem II and Doom, but Duke's my definite favourite.*

**Doesn't exactly fit the feminine stereotype, does it?**

I know. During the day I'm your average kind of girl, but as soon as the computer goes on I turn into a bit of a homicidal maniac – everything has to die horribly. **Dkay, we'll leave it with you.**



## KATY WALTERS

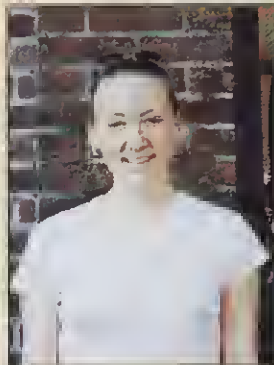
18, 1st year History

**What's on your hard drive?**

Word and Office 97 and a few art packages – nothing of great interest.

**No games of any sort?**

No, apart from *Alpha Centauri*, *X-Wing Alliance*, *FIFA 99*, *Blood II* and *SIN* (Not much, then – Ed). I'm a first-year Arts student, so I'm far too busy attending copious quantities of lectures and doing mounds of coursework to be messing around on computers.



## RUTH HALEY

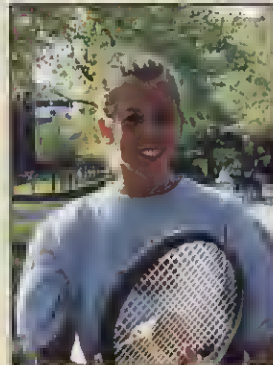
19, 2nd year Medicine

**What's on your hard drive?**

*Quake II, SiN, Unreal, Blood II and the Kingpin demo.*

**You don't really look like the violent sort.**

Well, I see it as a vital part of my degree course – I've got to harden up to all that blood and gore at some point. In fact I think violent games should be made compulsory study material.



## ALEX BENWELL

18, 1st year Psychology

**What's on your hard drive?**

Mostly my boyfriend's stuff – lots of golf and cricket games. Is it *Links*, or *PGA Tour*? Some nonsense, anyway. I thought the real thing was bad enough.

**He sounds really interesting...**

Yeah, he does spend rather a lot of time on his damn computer, but I manage to drag him out to the pub for an airing every two weeks or so.



## LYNSEY CATTERALL

21, 3rd year Biomaterials

**What's on your hard drive?**

I love playing all those cute games like *Rayman* and *Worms*, but you don't see many like them these days. I don't actually own a computer of any sort myself.

**Why should you be included in What's On Your Hard Drive then?**

How about because I'm naturally blonde and have a large chest? Fair enough.



## JULIA SIBUN

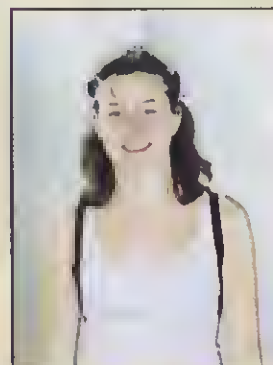
22, 3rd year Music

**What's on your hard drive?**

*Tomb Raider III*. It's one of the best games I've played. I just can't leave it alone.

**Wow, someone who's bought the game purely for its playability. That's got to be quite rare.**

Well, I didn't actually buy it, I found it under my boyfriend's bed. **Ah, that explains a lot.**



## HALEY FISHER

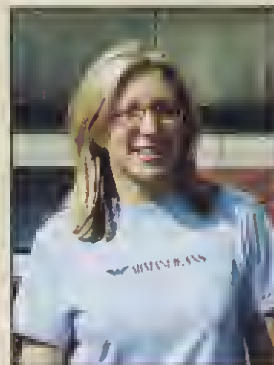
20, 2nd year Geography

**What's on your hard drive?**

Loads of flight sims including *Flight Sim 98*, *Flight Unlimited 2* and some World War II thingy. Oh, and *Worms*.

**Not being sexist, but it's pretty unusual to find a girl into flight simulators in such a big way.**

Not really, I just love grappling with a big joystick.



## ELLY BYNE

20, 1st year Commerce

**What's on your hard drive?**

*Micro Machines 3*, *Carmageddon II*, *Need For Speed III* and *Motorhead*.

**Does this call for a coy comment on women drivers?**

Just try it and you can guarantee flatness will take on a whole new meaning for you. I happen to think female drivers are far safer than the majority of little boys who inhabit our roads, imagining their little Fiestas are souped-up XK8s.



## LUCY TURNER

19, 2nd year Medicine

**What's on your hard drive?**

I've only got a laptop with solitaire on it, but I play on my brother's PC quite a bit. I've just bought him *Deer Hunter* for his birthday.

**Oh dear. I'm sure he'll love that.** I bought him *Theme Hospital* for Christmas but I think he completed it, because he doesn't seem to play it much.



## AMY HAND

20, 2nd year Law

**What's on your hard drive?**

*GoldenEye* and *Zelda* are pretty much permanent features on my N64, but I can't afford a PC at the moment.

**Poor girl. Student finances pressing hard?**

Actually, I decided to use my entire loan for travelling around Australia instead. It was amazing though. I can thoroughly recommend it.



# PC ZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the **ZONE** reviews first

## WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call

Activision 01895 456 7000  
 Blue Byte 01604 232200  
 BMG Interactive 0171 973 0011  
 Core Design 01332 297797  
 Cryo 01926 315559  
 Crystal Dynamics/Ubisoft 0181 944 9000  
 Eidos Interactive 0181 636 3000  
 Electronic Arts 01753 549442  
 Empire Interactive 0181 343 7337  
 Funsoft 01322 292513  
 Gremlin Interactive 0114 273 8601  
 GT Interactive 0171 258 3791  
 Infogrames 0161 827 8000  
 Interactive Magic 01344 409399  
 LiveMedia 01885 247714  
 MicroProse 01454 893893  
 Microsoft 0345 002000  
 Mindscape 01444 246333  
 NovaLogic 0171 405 1777  
 Ocean 0161 832 6633  
 Sierra 0118 920 9100  
 Sold Out 0171 721 8767  
 Take 2 Interactive 01753 854444  
 Telstar 01832 22232  
 Virgin 0171 358 2255  
 ZBLAC 01626 332233

## THE HALL OF SHAME

These are the games that we still haven't been sent for review. This means they're either completely crap and the publishers are scared we'll pan them, or their PR machine isn't quite up to full speed. This month's offenders (some of them have been in our Hall of Shame for some time, eh Maxis?) are...

**LULA VIRTUAL BABE** Take 2  
**STREETS OF SIMCITY** Maxis/EA  
**CENTPEDE** Hasbro  
**MEGAMAN X-4** Virgin  
**V-RALLY** Infogrames

## REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at **ZONE** pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we've got our Feedback section on page 100. This is where you get the opportunity to get your point of view into **PC ZONE**. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.



## DON'T BELIEVE THE JARGON

The standard spec machine these days is a P166 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the 'We say' bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

## WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

**PCZONE CLASSIC 90-100%** Here at **ZONE** we score every game out of 100. If a game receives a score of 90 or above, it is awarded the **PC ZONE Classic** award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not a fan of the genre.

**PCZONE RECOMMENDED 80-89%** If a game scores 80-89% it's awarded a **PC ZONE Recommended** award. Games that fall into this category are excellent examples of their type, and if you're a fan of the genre they're well worth buying.

**70-79%** Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

**20-69%** These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre or you see it at a reduced price.

**PCZONE PANTS 0-19%** Games that score under 20% should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating, and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.

## REVIEWS A-Z

This month's reviews in order

### NEW GAMES

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### BUDGET REVIEWS

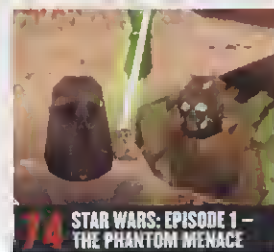
Clabro	96
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Quake II (alpha demo)	98
Star Trek: Birth Of The Federation	99
Tanktics	99
X-Wing Alliance	99



# DUNGEON

★ £TBC • Electronic Arts • Out now



Yes, it's skeletons versus giants: guess who's going to win (clue: the giants).

Vanessa Feltz gets caught by the paparazzi yet again.



Before long, your dungeon spreads out like a web.

## ALSO CONSIDER

**DUNGEON KEEPER** (EA Classics, £14.99) The original and no longer the best, buy this if you're skint. Or if you have a computer that wouldn't recognise a Window if it was thrown through it. **PCZ #70, 80%**

**KINGPIN** (Interplay, £39.99) Like *Dungeon Keeper* you are just as morally bankrupt, only you have guns rather than swords and sorcery. **PCZ #77, 92%**

**POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING** (EA, £39.99) Bullfrog's last remake casts you as an altogether nicer deity. Not as good as *Dungeon Keeper II* as it's not as good at being bad, if you catch my drift. **PCZ #70, 92%**



# DUNGEON KEEPER II

**PCZONE**  
**CLASSIC**

Underground, overground, dungeoning free... the evilest, dungeonest keeper is he. Who he? *Charlie Brooker*, of course

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3D acceleration through Direct3D **WE SAY** P266, 64Mb RAM and 3D card would be better

“The animation rocks great big polygonal bells throughout – check out the crawling salamander monster, for instance”

**Y**ey, we all get a little carried away sometimes. Here at **PC ZONE** we'd like to confess to getting a little carried away back in issue 53 when we reviewed the original *Dungeon Keeper*. Sure, it was unlike any other game around. Sure, it was incredibly absorbing. And sure, it was one of the most ambitious games we'd ever seen.

But 96 per cent? *C'mon!*

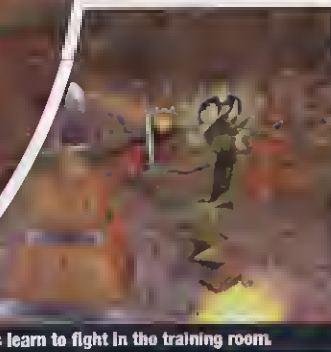
Y'see, the breathless excitement that overcame our reviewer (er, yours truly, incidentally) wasn't uniformly matched across the team. Chris, for one, wasn't entirely enamoured with the thing: “Too repetitive and too bloody brown,” summarises his overall opinion. And many of you agreed with him. The graphics, which were cutting- ➔



Mark at mister show-off.



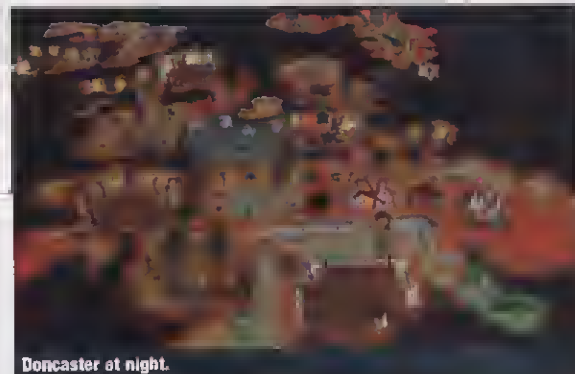
You'll need lots of this.



Creatures learn to fight in the training room.



Michael Flatley: Feet of Flames.



Doncaster at night.



And it all spins around, too. Fantastic.



Chickens from the hatchery: ripe for eating.



I've kissed every single one of those goblins.

edge when the game went into production but technically outdated by the time it finally appeared, received the fiercest criticism (some people even argued that the blocky visuals alone spoiled the game for them), while the recurring cycle of dungeon-building that formed the majority of levels also got a kicking.

Which isn't to imply that the game stank. No, no, no. It really was excellent (you voted it Strategy Game Of The Year in our readers' awards). But 96 per cent? Maybe that was a *lickle* bit generous.

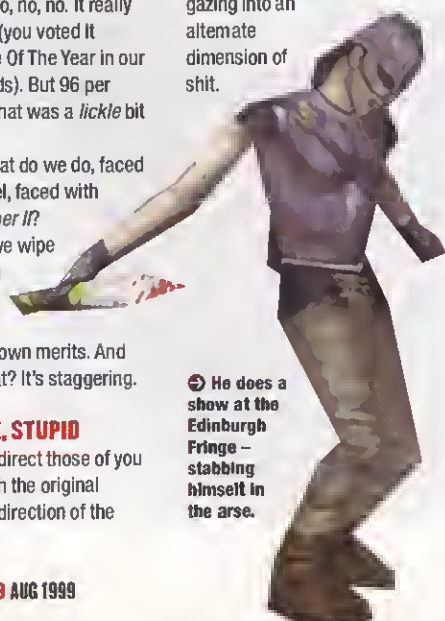
So now what do we do, faced with the sequel, faced with *Dungeon Keeper II*? Here's what: we wipe the slate clean and play the new game entirely on its own merits. And you know what? It's staggering.

## START HERE, STUPID

Now, may we direct those of you unfamiliar with the original *Keeper* in the direction of the

What's It All Abaaaht? panel on the right? It tells you everything you need to know about the general concept behind the game. Okay? Cheers. For the rest of you, we'll press on and explain what's new and different and now and now about this here sequel.

First things first: the graphics. Jesus, the graphics. Having played this, going back to look at the first game would be like gazing into an alternate dimension of shit.



He does a show at the Edinburgh Fringe – stabbing himself in the arse.

That's not to denigrate the sterling work of the artists involved in the first *Keeper* (if you've got any doubts about the ability of Mark Healey, who designed many of the original *Keeper*'s menagerie, check out Lionhead's upcoming *Black & White* and try to stop your jaw from dropping), but it does effectively illustrate the visual leaps and bounds PC games have made in the space of a few short years. When *Keeper* numero uno turned up, 3D accelerator cards were just starting to make their presence felt. Nowadays, any game that doesn't feature more rotating polygons than your mind can process might as well be binned as far as the paying public are concerned. The way things are going, it'll be a miracle if the next edition of *Microsoft Excel* doesn't include volumetric fogging, polygonal text, and a texture-mapped cursor casting real-time shadows across an intricate model of the Eiffel Tower that rotates continually in the background whether you want it to or not.

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABAAAHT?

It's a bit like this, a bit like that, and a bit like...

*Dungeon Keeper* is a highly unusual game that shakes a defiant fist in the face of reasonable explanation by managing to straddle about 27 different gaming genres at the same time. The idea is this: you are an unseen evil being who's in command of an underground dungeon. You control every aspect of this dungeon, from the construction of new areas to the upkeep of existing ones, and your aim is to expand your evil little realm as far and wide as possible, conquering neighbouring dungeons and the like, all the while keeping an eye on resources.

So far, so *SimCity*. Which all sounds a bit yawnsome, and probably would be were it not for the fact that your dungeon teems with life – and ugly, dirty, smelly, violent life at that. See, faintly dull managerial duties aside, you also have to look after a vast menagerie of different monsters who come to dwell in your lair and do your bidding. If you don't look after them properly, they get bored, or angry, or fight among themselves and smash the place up.

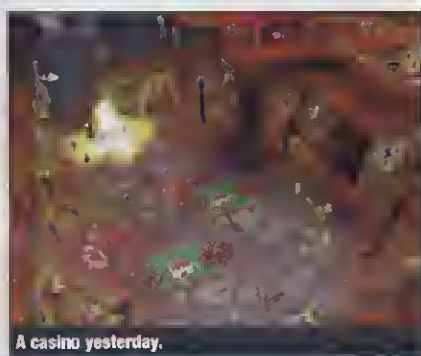
It's also a bit like *Command & Conquer*, in that you have to order your minions into battle, and work out tactics, and be all clever and that. It's also a bit like *Quake*, because you can possess any monster in your realm and run around in a 3D first-person view.

Interested? You should be. Sceptical? Yes, you probably are, and rightly so – it could be a case of jack of all trades, master of none. But it isn't. It works. It all hangs together. Sure, any one element taken on its own couldn't be considered the finest example of the genre, but collectively, with one whole section of game merging seamlessly into another, it works shockingly well.





"Hoy hey, we're the vampires. And people say we congregate in graveyards and drink the blood of virgins..."



A casino yesterday.



The 1999 London Anoraxie Marathon.

Er, hang on. Where were we going with this? Oh yes, 30 cards and the effect they've had on the games we play. As we were saying, *Dungeon Keeper II* is a cracking example. In the first game, all the creatures were represented by blocky, pre-rendered sprites which looked jarringly out of place against the polygonal dungeon walls. Now it's all polygonal. And the cast looks amazing, thanks in part to cunning texture design (peer closely and you can see that each beastie actually consists of very few polygons indeed – which keeps the frame rate healthy – yet the seamless 'skin' stretched across them effectively masks that fact). And speaking of frame rates, the animation rocks great big polygonal bells throughout – check out the crawling salamander monster, for instance.

All things considered, the dungeon inmates have sacks more personality than before. They're far more alive; the imps scamper more skittishly; the bile

demon looks fatter and wobblier; the horned reaper is genuinely scary (and he's on *your* side).

### VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

Enough about pretty pictures and madness. This is a review, not a conversation, so here's what it's like to play. Each level opens with a neat, fully

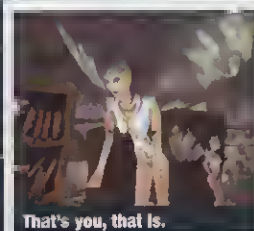
narrated 'fly-by' scene which helps to illustrate your objective. Let's say you've got to wipe out some highfalutin Lord Of The Realm or something; it'll float by his castle as he paces up and down, then move on to point out a useful bit of information – a prison, or a big seam of gold, say – before moving toward the heart of your dungeon-to-be and kicking off the action proper.

Then you're required to do a fair amount of dungeon-building, of course; although on some stages you find yourself starting from scratch, and on others you have half the thing built for you already. There's often a lot to be done, mind, and it's the repetition of dungeon construction (albeit enjoyable construction) that soured the first game for many people.

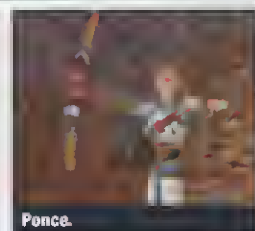
Ah, but. Ah, but what? Ah, but this: in *Dungeon Keeper II* the levels are far, far more varied. Each one comes in the form of a distinct mission, complete with its own set of sub-



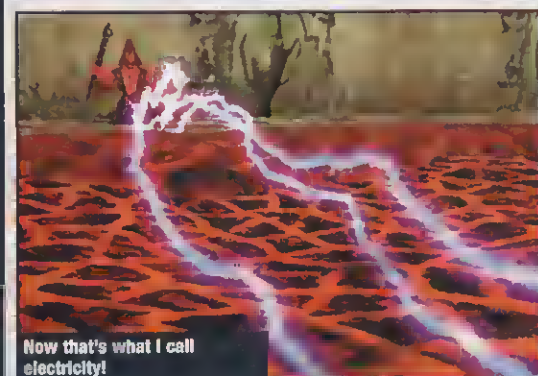
☉ Suits of armour are going to be 'in' this year, mark our words.



That's you, that is.



Ponce.



Now that's what I call electricity!



Derk Angel in the hatchery: sounds like a poncey novel.

## FIRST-MONSTER PERSPECTIVE

Choose a monster and 'become' it

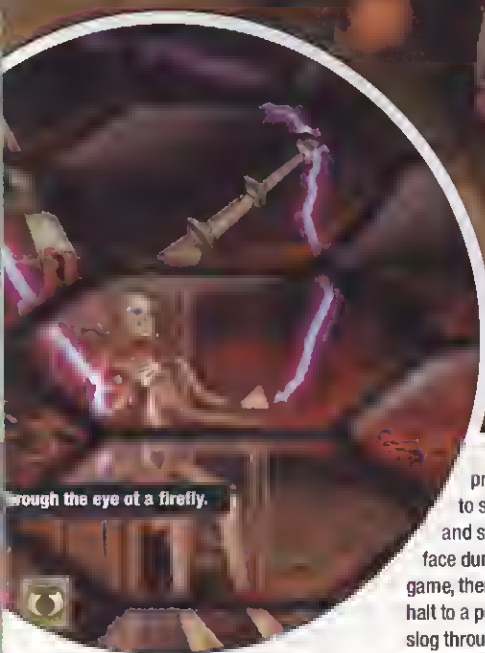
Once you've seen off the first couple of levels, you're granted use of the 'Possession' spell, which is approximately ten billion times more interesting than it sounds, because it enables you to choose any creature in your dungeon and 'become' it for a bit – at which point the point-'n'-click interface vanishes and you find yourself scampering around in full-on 3D *Quake-o-vision*.

Fantastically, the way you move and the way you see alter radically from creature to creature. Possess a winkle little elf, for instance, and you skitter about almost at floor level; take over a glant and you pound about like Ray Winstone. What's more, each monster has its own range of unique weapons and abilities: some can fire spells, some can enter a kind of 'sniper' mode, and some can fly.

Old-skool *Keeper* had the same feature, but it never really became useful – and besides, the pre-rendered monsters looked pretty ropy when viewed up close. In *Keeper II* it's been developed in all the right ways, so much so that utilising the first-person option is downright essential on some levels.

The single most useful change is the ability to form groups when in first-person mode. Hit the right key and you can wander around the dungeon highlighting anyone who catches your eye – and they'll follow you around. Once you've assembled a decent gang you can lead them wherever you like – which is often the best way to intrude on enemy territory, especially since they'll attack anything you attack.

Ooooooh, he's got himself in a bit of strop now, has he?



through the eye of a firefly.

objectives. And they're all different, too: one minute you're slogging your way through enemy territory in order to reach a particular knight before he disappears down a portal, and the next you're desperately defending your dungeon from covert giant attack. Sometimes you've got shedloads of money, other times you're counting every penny; sometimes you're cramped inside huge areas of impenetrable rock, other times you can dig around in any direction you damn well please. You're forced to switch tactics from stage to stage, and it's by doing this that you begin to appreciate just how much is going on in the game.

The game also manages to control Bullfrog's one 'little

problem': their tendency to shove all their features and surprises right into your face during the first half of the game, thereby reducing the final half to a potentially dispiriting slog through a tried and tested landscape. None of that here; new features – important new features – are still being introduced right up to the final level. There's always something to look forward to; the pace is absolutely bang on. That's boring to read about, but incredibly important in practice.

## IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE ORIGINAL...

...then why should you buy this? Good question. Well, if you *hated* the original, absolutely *despised* it, then steer well clear. And calm down. This isn't an entirely different game. Far from it. Underneath, the basic structure



"I'm William Shatner, and you're watching *When Heroes Attack*."



A bunch of blo demons approaching some traps.

## THE FACE THAT LAUNCHED A THOUSAND 'HORN' JOKES

Let's have a big welcome for the Horned Reaper...

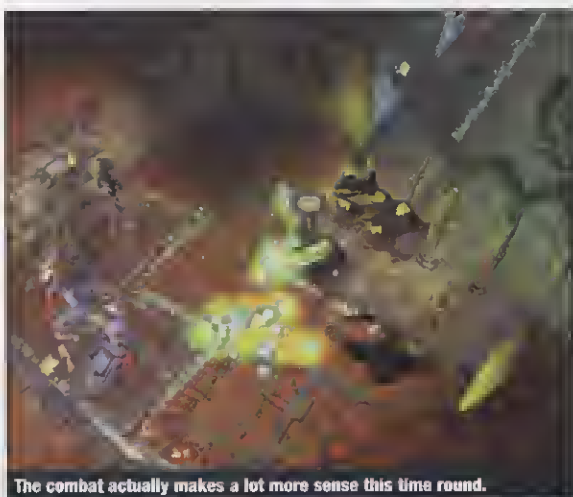
☺ If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

Meet the Horned Reaper, or 'Horny', as they insist on calling him. In the original game, Horny was, like, the most awesomest monster you could get in your dungeon. He'd turn up toward the end of the game, causing trouble. This time round, he's your partner in crime rather than a mere tenant: he puts in an appearance at the end of each level, rising through the floor in a shower of flame and stomping about in a menacing fashion. It's a satisfying little sequence – the game's very own equivalent of a porn movie 'money shot'.

Ooh, speaking of movies, did we mention the FMV, which crops up in little between-level bursts? It's good, it's funny, and it's short. And it's good. We said 'good' didn't we? Yes. Right.

Anyway, that Horned Reaper, eh? Later on in the game, you can summon his presence yourself during a level if things are going a bit pear-shaped. He's a bit unpredictable mind – and you can only use him once per stage, so pick your moment.





The combat actually makes a lot more sense this time round.

## MORE MODES FOR YOUR MONEY

Three other game modes that we haven't got the space to mention except in the form of a list with brief, bite-size descriptions

### MULTIPLAYER MODE

Does exactly what it says on the tin: lets you play a very satisfying game of multiplayer *Keeper* against a gang of friends over your own little network or that big, fat, sprawling Internet thing.

### MY PET DUNGEON MODE

Play the game just like *SimCity* or *Theme Hospital* – ie there are no competitors, just you and your luvverly dungeon, which you can spruce up and nurture (or destroy, if you go a bit 'funny') at leisure.

### SKIRMISH MODE

Essentially the same as multiplayer, except that you take on a bunch of computer-controlled dungeon keepers instead of real live human beings.

remains fundamentally the same. On the other hand, if you merely fell a little let down or frustrated by the first offering, then hip, hip, hooray, you're in luck, because *Dungeon Keeper II* really is the

bother trying to convince you any further.

### THE END

Okay, let's summarise the whole game as neatly as we can: it's like someone took every different gaming genre in existence and hurled them into a blender, whizzed it up, and poured you out a great big helping of all the creamiest, loveliest bits. Sort of. Look, just go back and read the review. [E]

**"There's always something to look forward to; the pace is absolutely bang on"**

game *Dungeon Keeper* was trying so damn hard to be. The crazy ambitious features and diverse gameplay elements hang together far more coherently than before. There's a far greater sense of purpose and direction on every single level. Not to mention control and excitement – the combat makes a lot more sense than it did (although it still isn't the game's strong point).

The AI appears to have improved too. And then of course there's those graphics. And if you loved the first game, we won't

## PCZ VERDICT

### UPPERS Incredible variety •

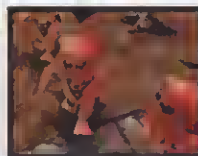
Wonderful visuals • Deep, absorbing gameplay • Perfect pace and balance • A big improvement on the original

**DOWNERS** Inherently similar to the first one • Will drink your spare time like a busload of alcoholics in a brewery

**94** Great pacing.  
Great looks.  
Great game

## YOU PEOPLE ARE MONSTERS

Some of the motley crew you command in *Dungeon Keeper II*



### IMP

Yer basic dogsbody. Imps do all the groundwork in your dungeon – digging, fixing, claiming new

areas for yourself – and are firmly at the bottom of the pecking order. They're cute. But not that cute. You wouldn't want to kiss one or anything.



### GOBLIN

Goblins are the regular schmoes of the *Dungeon Keeper* world. They don't really excel at

anything in particular, but they're sort of handy to have around. A bit like the Swiss.



### WARLOCK

Hey, it takes nerve to dress like this. Warlocks study in your dungeon libraries, and as you

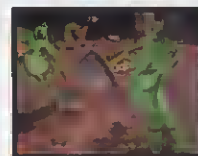
might expect they're good at casting spells – like fireballs and that. They're rubbish at hand-to-hand combat though.



### FIREFLY

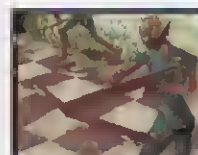
These handy little critters can fly over anything, and also provide their own light source. As such

they're ideal for reconnaissance missions.



### TROLL

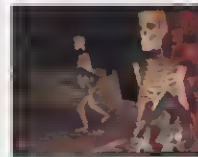
Say hello to Eddie Punchclock. Trolls are your factory workers. They're good at manufacturing traps, doors and... er, more traps and doors.



### DARK ELF

Skinny sods who know a thing or two about archery. Pop one into first-person

mode and you're rewarded with an excellent 'sniper' option.



### SKELETON

You get to manufacture skeletons yourself – just lock an enemy creature in your prison until it starves to death, and it comes back as one of these. Now that's eco-friendly.



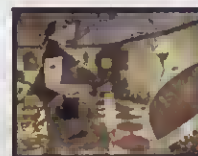
### MISTRESS

Glad from head to toe in tight-fitting leather, Mistresses enjoy using the torture chamber and fighting other creatures. (Games are sick and wrong.)



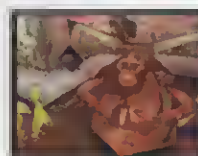
### SALAMANDER

Lizard-like beasts which would be really rather rubbish were it not for their peculiar ability to wander unharmed across red-hot lava. Which, as you might imagine, comes in very handy during some stages of the game.



### ROGUE

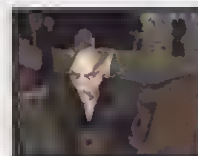
Another cool one, this. Take control of a rogue and you can sneak inside enemy territory without being rumbled (well, almost).



### BILE DEMON

Overweight, ugly, smelly, and with poor control of their bodily functions, Bile Demons would be hell

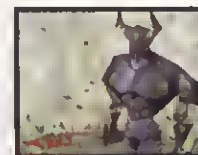
to share an office with. Luckily you only have to share a dungeon with them. And they're actually pretty useful in a fight – they get stuck right in at close range.



### VAMPIRE

Once you've 'built' a graveyard, you can start harvesting Vampires in a similar manner to the

skellies. They play dirty in fights by hypnotising people and that. And they drink blood. Tch, what's the world coming to?



### BLACK KNIGHT

Or Mister Fisticuffs to you and me. Black Knights are fighters through and through.

Look at him. See – he wants to fight you right now. Either that or kiss you. Can't tell.



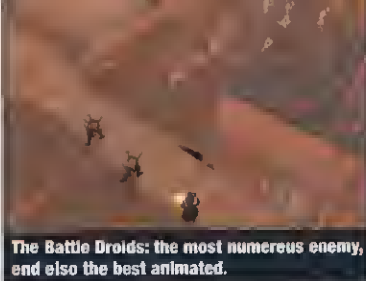
### DARK ANGEL

Fallen angels, these guys, and therefore not

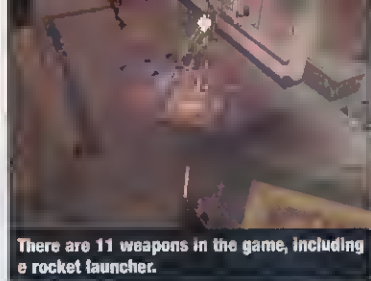
to be trifled with. Among their more trifling talents is the ability to raise entire armies of warrior skeletons at will. Available for children's parties and *How Do They Do That*-type TV shows.



One of the many in-game cut-scenes.



The Battle Droids: the most numerous enemy, and also the best animated.



There are 11 weapons in the game, including a rocket launcher.



The underwater city of Otoh Gunga.

# STAR WARS: EPISODE 1 THE PHANTOM

★ £34.99 LucasArts/Activision • Out now

**PC ZONE's own phantom menace, Richie Shoemaker, takes a look at the game of a film you just might have heard of**

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb Direct3D-compatible graphics accelerator card **WE SAY** The office P266 handled the game surprisingly well

**L**ove it or hate it, you can't fail to have heard of *Star Wars*, either from countless re-runs or countless fans insisting that it's the greatest series of films ever made – which it is. As a series of games though, *Star Wars* has thrown up a few oddities over the years, and while none have really been that bad, a few have certainly been on the wrong side of average. *The Phantom Menace*, it has to be said, isn't quite the game we were hoping for.

## PHANTOM RAIDER

Mirroring the storyline in the actual film, you start off in the sandals of the young Obi-Wan

Kenobi, Jedi apprentice to Qui-Gon Jinn. Armed with a lightsaber, much of the game involves running around beating back battle droids, sand people and eventually new bad guy Darth Maul. Along the way you meet all the other characters from the movie, and at various stages you take control of Qui-Gon, Queen Amidala and Captain Panaka as you fight to end the Trade Federation embargo of the peaceful planet of Naboo. Mercifully, you're spared the option to play as the terminally irritating Jar Jar Binks, and although he does crop up at regular intervals, his role is a minor one. It would have been

## ALSO CONSIDER

**STAR WARS: EPISODE I – RAGER** (LucasArts, £39.99) The 'other' *Phantom Menace* game. Race around at 600kph as the young Vader, before he succumbs to the Dark Side. **REVIEWED ON PAGE 85**

**JEDI KNIGHT/MYSTORIES OF THE SITH** (LucasArts/Activision, £29.99) With the excellent *Mysteries Of The Sith* bundled in, this is perhaps the finest *Star Wars* game yet seen. More action than adventure perhaps, but still more adventure than *The Phantom Menace* game. **PCZ #74, 90%**

**STAR WARS: EPISODE I – THE PHANTOM MENACE** (LucasFilm, £20, including fizzy pop and grub) For the price, watching the film six times is far better value. The graphics are better too.

nice to sever his Gungan head to put paid to his return in the next film in the series, but alas...

Although billed as an action adventure, the adventure

elements are little more than intrusions of dialogue that, in the first half, have little bearing on the way the game is played. Those who were hoping for a mixture of *Tomb Raider* and *Grim Fandango* will be disappointed to learn that *The Phantom Menace* contains less of the former and nothing of the latter. Put simply, *The Phantom Menace* is an action game with a smattering of dialogue. You run around shooting people, pressing switches and

**“Put simply, *The Phantom Menace* is an action game with a smattering of dialogue”**

bounding across platforms and avoiding enemy fire. There are a few weapons to pick up and a useful Force power that pushes droids to the ground, but apart from that the game is undeniably derivative of *Tomb Raider*.

## EWAN ME

While the in-game cut-scenes that drive the story forward are of a high quality, it's the level design that pulls *The Phantom Menace*

under the Recommended mark. You have to spend far too much time trying to find switches in out-of-the-way places and attempting to leap up to inaccessible platforms, and as a result the game fails to match the high standard of most of the other *Star Wars* titles.

Not only that, but some of the missions where you have to escort one of the cast members to the end of the level are hampered by such illogical AI that the

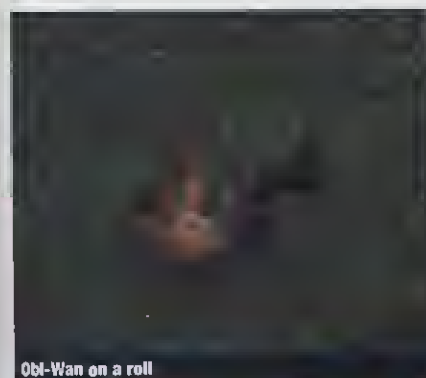
restrictions placed on developers Big Ape by keeping to the plot become readily apparent. Even though you are taken away to events that were skimmed upon during the film, in hindsight it was a mistake not to make more of them. Perhaps a bit more variation, or at least a few more allies to fight alongside would have helped.

That aside, *The Phantom Menace* is for the most part an

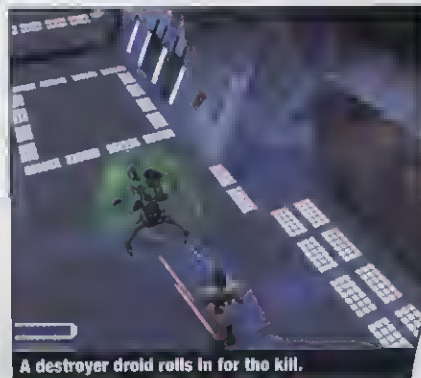




Mos Espa and the Palace of Theed are particularly attractive.



Obi-Wan on a roll



A destroyer droid rolls in for the kill.

Sand people – the most misunderstood race in the galaxy.



Hang on, that's not supposed to happen...

# MENACE

enjoyable romp through territory made familiar in the movie. If you have seen the film, it's perhaps the only way you'll be able to relive the experience again and again, short of buying a grainy pirate film with no sound. Whirling around swiping droids in half does have its moments, especially as a lot of the animation is very good. Split up with stylish in-game cut-scenes, there are brief nanoseconds when you are fooled into thinking that you are Ewan McGregor leaping around, pushing droids to the floor and disassembling enemy units in a violent manner. But such moments aren't the result of a well-designed game, they're more attributable to the fact that our brains release 'happy pills' every time we hear a lightsaber being swung, such is the power of *Star Wars*.

*The Phantom Menace* shows too much of its console-led, mass-market roots to come across as a cutting-edge PC game. The visuals are crisp and colourful and the levels do look

spectacular, but the reliance on the film's plot stifles what could have been so much more. It's disappointing that *The Phantom Menace* fails to make the grade, although the next game in the saga, *Obi-Wan* (or *Jedi Knight III*), is sure to be nothing short of spectacular.

Oh, and if you're *not* a *Star Wars* fan, feel free to fake a few points off the score – if you haven't done already. **PCZ**

## PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Beautiful scenery and animation • Four characters to control • Great atmosphere thanks to the voices, music and sound • It's *Star Wars* • Er, nice (but thin) manual
- DOWNERS Too much fruitless searching • Poor viewpoint • Clunky interface • No multiplayer • You're unlikely to play it more than once

**78** No match for a good blaster

## USE THE CHEATS, LUKE

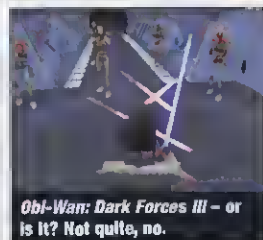
### *The Phantom Menace* has it's own view on cheating

Just as no one likes a person who tells you how good a film is and then proceeds to give the whole plot away before you've even had the chance to see it, people who cheat at games are equally despicable. Not so when it comes to *The Phantom Menace*. Yes, it's a great film, with awesome special effects, but that bit at the end when... Just kidding.

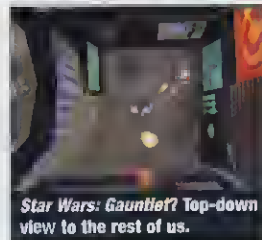
Anyway, cheats code for *The Phantom Menace* are already available and, strange as it may seem, two of them allow you to play the game through a whole new perspective. The top-down *Gauntlet* view is pretty self-explanatory and of little value; however, the lower-down third-person view is sometimes very useful and certainly more exciting than the usual 'you've got dandruff' view.

It's obvious that the developers were fying with the idea of producing a 'proper' third-person view and decided to scrap it – not because it didn't work, but more likely because it would have involved writing a both a PC and a console version, leading to higher costs.

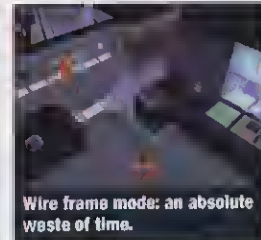
There are problems with clipping, and the characters do look a little basic, but add a crosshair and smooth out the textures and you've got an entirely new game. You can see enemies from further away, although the control system can't really handle a *Quake*-style set-up. It's worth a look if you don't mind getting lost a few times – press 'backspace' during the game and type 'naughty naughty' or 'from above'.



Obi-Wan: Dark Forces III – or is it? Not quite, no.



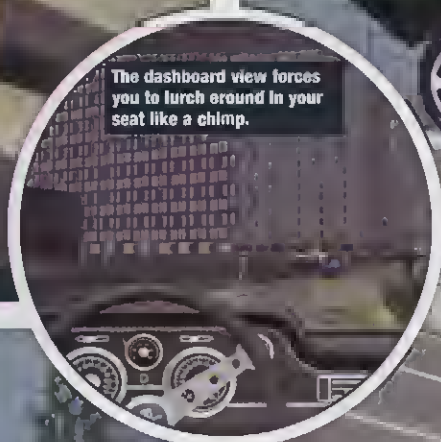
Star Wars: Gauntlet? Top-down view to the rest of us.



Wire frame mode: an absolute waste of time.



The VW New Beetle takes a spill.



Much of the city is breakable, including this newspaper box.



Dukes Of Hazard fans will immediately feel at home.

# MIDTOWN

★ Microsoft • £39.99 • Out now

Eyes peeled for the fuzz, *Steve Hill* takes a cruise round the Windy City. Parp!

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** TCP/IP, IPX, modem **WE SAY** A P333 with a decent 3D card is about right

## ALSO CONSIDER

**BREAKNECK (THQ, £29.99)** Superb graphics, high-speed thrills and a vast array of vehicles add up to an excellent arcade racer.

PCZ #78, 89%

**NEED FOR SPEED III (Electronic Arts, £29.99)** The fourth instalment is on its way, but this one still does the business, particularly in cops 'n' robbers mode.

PCZ #69, 91%

**CARMAGEDDON II (SCI, £39.99)** Similar to *Midtown*, except the pedestrians don't always leap out of the way, much to the delight of acne-ridden virgins.

PCZ #69, 95%

**GRAND THEFT AUTO (Take 2, £19.99)** Different to *Midtown* in terms of gameplay and graphics, although it does involve driving around a living city.

PCZ #58, 92%

## PCZONE CLASSIC

In these cynical days of 'reissue, repackage, re-evaluate', an original game is about as rare as proverbial rocking horse shit. And when it comes to racing games, you might as well forget it, with most developers showing about as much ingenuity as the average boy band.

Not so Angel Studios, the talent behind Microsoft's *Midtown Madness*. Instead of pissing about inventing hover vehicles that race on the moon, or resurrecting some obscure sport, what they've done is to take a modern-day city

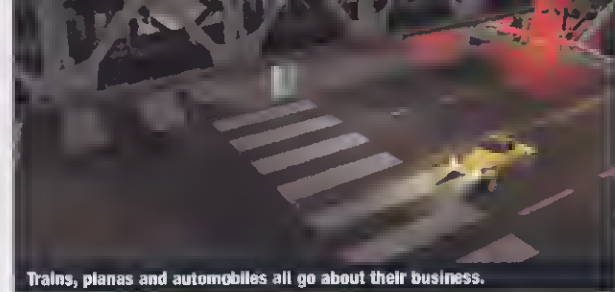
and fill it with authentic vehicles. No guns, no gimmicks, just accurately modelled cars and a meticulously recreated city.

That city is Chicago, Illinois, which to the less geographically minded is somewhere in America near a big lake. Clearly, some kind of artistic licence has been taken, and what we have is a slightly compressed version of the real thing, comprising all the major landmarks. It's very well done though, and effortlessly conveys the sense of being in a fully functioning, living city. Planes fly overhead, traffic stops at red lights, and the police even have their own network.

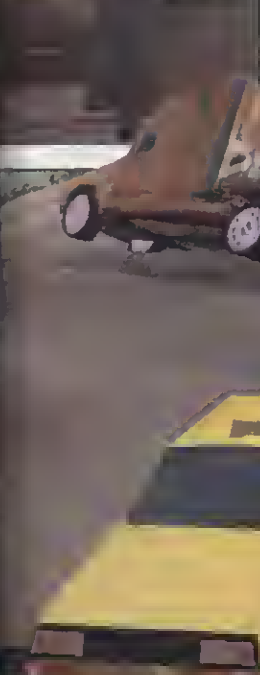

## SIM CITY

City simulation is a different game altogether though, and what we're talking here is action-packed racing, the game featuring a variety of different modes, with success unlocking further vehicles and tracks. Circuit races are over charted courses, with other roads blocked off, Blitz races take place against the clock; and Checkpoint races



Trains, planes and automobiles all go about their business.

"We're hearing reports of a lorry jack-knifing on the M25..."

# MADNESS

involve clearing all points before your opponents. The latter two modes take place with incidental traffic in full effect, often leading to the midtown madness of the title. The police obviously take a dim view of unauthorised street races, and once alerted to a felony will be all over you like a cheap suit. Having a police car slew across your path with the finish line in sight is enough to provoke a wry grin at best, and a volley of foul and abusive language at worst.

actually plan your route in order to avoid the busies.

## TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER

Chicago may be synonymous with wind, but rain and snow play their part here, and driving is noticeably affected by adverse weather conditions. It's a case of horses for courses, and the ten vehicles on offer have genuinely different characteristics in terms of handling, speed, durability and so forth. So whether it's a VW New Beetle for weaving between

an hour simply cruising around, either legally or otherwise. Clearly, there's more fun to be had in the latter, and there's plenty of scope for it, be it jumping the odd red light or playing chicken on the freeway. And to add variety, the density of police, traffic and pedestrians can all be altered.

## HATEFUL LUVVIE

It's a comparison that's been used before, but *Midtown Madness* is as close as any game has come to recreating ITV's *Police, Camera,*

**"Midtown Madness is anarchic fun, plain and simple, as well as being on the right side of challenging"**

However, the cops appear to be graduates of The Blues Brothers' school of motoring, and the artificial stupidity has been particularly well-implemented. There's much fun to be had in giving them the runaround, and great satisfaction to be gleaned from glancing into the rear-view mirror to see a police car drive straight into the bollard that you've expertly negotiated. In fact, in some races you can

the traffic, an 18-wheel truck for ploughing through the traffic, or a Ford Mustang Fastback for performing *Starsky & Hutch*-style turns, all tastes are catered for.

And if you simply want to put your choice of vehicle through its paces, as well as learn the intricacies of the city, the Cruise mode enables you to do just that. In fact it's quite easy to crank up the tunes (see Music Sounds Better With You panel) and spend

*Action!* The carnage is relentless, and although some of it is scripted to an extent, moments of pure comedy occur naturally, although this being a Microsoft game no one actually gets hurt.

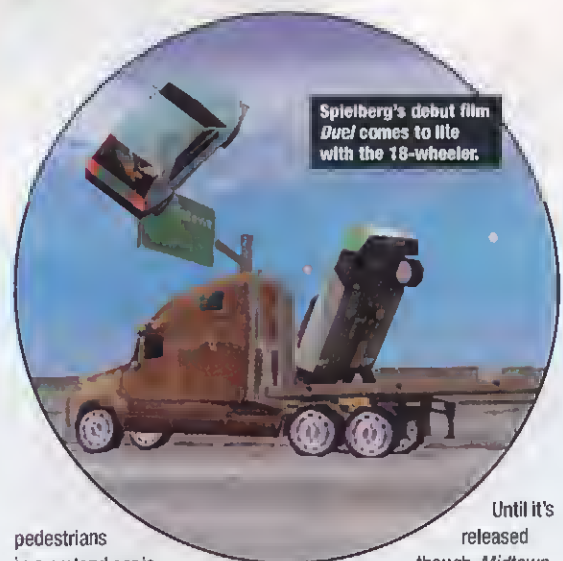
Of course, the cynics will dismiss it as *Carnageddon Lite*, berating the fact that pedestrians leap out of the way instead of exploding over your windscreen like a big bag of blood. However, it pretending to run over pretend

## MUSIC SOUNDS BETTER WITH YOU

You can choose your own music to listen to

Since the dawn of time, music in games has been a contentious issue, the majority of it being unlistenable bile. Forcing you to endure the tortured outpourings of some in-house amateur musician while there's a perfectly good CD player going to waste is selfish in the extreme. Fortunately, while the default music in *Midtown Madness* is actually fairly inoffensive, an option has been included which enables you to play your own CDs, which in our opinion represents a victory for common sense. So what are you going to listen to? Something by Chicago or Traffic, perhaps? Before you could say "frustrated music journalist", we fed some ideas into the master computer and came up with this definitive list...

- 1 Keeping Two Chevrons Apart - Half Man Half Biscuit
- 2 Telepathic Traffic - Archers Of Loaf
- 3 Wreck My Car - Julian Cope
- 4 Crash - The Primitives
- 5 Road Rage - Catatonia
- 6 Chicago, Now! - The Fall
- 7 In The City - The Jam
- 8 Crosstown Traffic - The Jimi Hendrix Experience
- 9 Police On My Back - The Clash
- 10 Driving In My Car - Madness



pedestrians in a pretend car is one of your criteria for a piece of entertainment, then it might be worth taking a look at what's missing from your life.

*Midtown Madness* is anarchic fun, plain and simple, as well as being on the right side of challenging. The balance of vehicles is superb, and some ingenious design has gone into the courses. And if you're thinking that the game looks a bit like the forthcoming *Driver*, you'd be absolutely right, and the inclusion of a classic muscle car provides a further parallel.

We're still expecting *Driver* to be a superb game (as are GT, having splashed out a million pounds on a TV ad), and judging by what we've seen, it should be.

Until it's released though, *Midtown Madness* more than fills the gap and is as refreshing a game as its pseudo predecessor *Motocross Madness* was. We said it then and we'll say it again: Microsoft in good game shock. **PCZ**

## PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Takes place in a real city • Features authentic vehicles • You can play your own tunes • Plenty of scope for add-ons
- DOWNERS Only one city • Only ten vehicles • No replays

**90** Automotive bedlam at its best



## NOTHING'S GOING FASTER THAN OUR MIDTOWN MADNESS DEAL

Head to Electronics Boutique for the best racing deal ever. To celebrate the launch of the totally manic driving game, Midtown Madness, we've put together the ultimate gaming package.

Microsoft® Midtown Madness, Microsoft® SideWinder® Force Feedback Steering Wheel, Microsoft® SideWinder® Freestyle Pro, Microsoft® Monster Truck Madness® II\*, Microsoft® Motocross Madness\* and Microsoft® CART Precision Racing™\* all for the amazing price of £165.

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**THE WORD ON THE STREET**

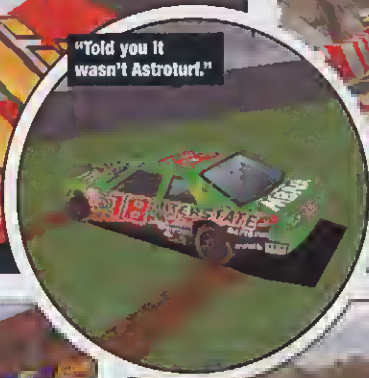
Microsoft, Monster Truck Madness, SideWinder are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. \*Full versions included inside the packaging of either Microsoft® SideWinder® Force Feedback Steering Wheel or Microsoft® SideWinder® Freestyle Pro.







In a desperate attempt to be disqualified, we flatten the cameraman.



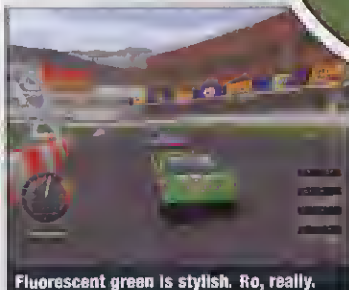
"Told you it wasn't AstroTurf."



Bonk! Bonk! Bonk! Bonk! Bonk! The audio is simply dire.



Look ma, no steering wheel!



Fluorescent green is stylish. Ro, really.



Rivals don't like you trying to overtake.



Draw distance is good but rather blocky.

# NASCAR ROAD RACER

★ £29.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

It's NASCAR brawn on Formula One-style circuits. Even so, *Phil Wand* has had more fun stuck at the M11 roadworks

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P133 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 2Mb DirectX compatible video card **WE SAY** P200 recommended

## ALSO CONSIDER

**TOCA 2** (Codemasters, £39.99) When it comes to driving games, Codemasters can do no wrong. *TOCA 2* puts all the competition in the shade. **PCZ #76, 93%**

**VIPER RACING** (Sierra, £39.99) Okay, so there's just one model to pick from. But in terms of handling and realistic feel, few come close. **PCZ #73, 80%**

**NASCAR REVOLUTION** (Electronic Arts, £34.99) Another disappointing NASCAR game that's too simple, too easy and a bit too frustrating. **PCZ #76, 70%**

**N**ASCAR is often associated with Scalextric-like circuits and slack-jawed drivers called Al, Bob or Randy. When not at the wheel of their substitute grizzly, they're clutching a squealing pig under one arm and sucking on a clay pipe. And they're dead boring. Oval circuits are for athletes and Walthamstow greyhounds. Cars were designed to negotiate all manner of different corners, gradients, bumps and twists, so watching them go round and round like they're on an invisible tether is enough to make us comatose.

But wait. What's this? EA Sports attempting to wake us up with barking mad V8 engines and winding tracks just like in *Touring Car* and *Formula One*? Welcome, *NASCAR Road Racer*.

## AND THEY'RE OFF

Each race starts with an overhead view of vehicles jostling for position, and of the track wriggling away into the distance. Straight away you notice that all

is distinctly lacklustre. As you can see from the screenshots, *NASCAR Road Racer* looks rather ragged in comparison to rivals such as Codemasters' *TOCA 2* (PCZ #76, 93%).

Audio quality isn't much better. Hit another car or scrape a barrier and it sounds like an excerpt from a Three Stooges fight scene. Lock tenders with a rival and it sounds like you've got an automatic pop-gun strapped to

you do come up on a bend too fast, simply jump on the brakes and tly round without a scratch. Touch another car and it behaves erratically, almost as though you've just disturbed the driver from a snooze.

Even with the latest-generation steering wheel attached to the system the whole game feels remote, mainly due to the lack of any force feedback settings. Our latest-generation ACT Labs wheel was heavy and lifeless, as though we were sitting at the controls of a combine harvester. The keyboard is far more responsive.

To sum up, *Road Racer* is an elementary, single-player arcade game dressed up as a simulation, with the NASCAR badge to hurry sales along. To be brutally honest, it has very little in its favour. **PCZ**

**“Touch another car and it behaves erratically, almost as though you've just disturbed the driver from a snooze”**

the cars rock gently back and forth like miniature cross-channel ferries. This is presumably to give the impression of an undulating road surface, but in actual fact it makes it look as though everyone's got odd-sized tyres. A similar effect was used in Sega's aged *Daytona USA* and it didn't look realistic there either.

Another thing you spot is that your expensive 3D accelerator hardware hasn't clicked into action. And you know what? It never will. Circuits and scenery are all rendered in software, making them universally blocky and uninspiring. Although EA Sports will tell you this was deliberate, in that it enables people to run the game on the simplest of PC set-ups, the result

the root. It's actually quite funny, but then we haven't paid money for the game.

## FORTY WINKS AT THE WHEEL

Opponents don't seem to adopt any particular stance before each corner, meaning you have to second-guess them the whole time. And they make every effort to veer into your path when you overtake, meaning you're hopping mad by the time you reach the finish line. All in all, the AI feels very dated.

Handling isn't too much to get excited about either. Where other titles provide a variable realism and physics set-up, *Road Racer* doesn't even hint at them. This leads to dead steering and hugely predictable races every time. If



⚡ Black-flagged for being asleep at the wheel. Hardly our fault.

## PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Works on anything from a P133 upwards
- OWNERS Comical sounds • Sega Saturn graphics • No multiplayer
- No in-game force feedback set-up
- Lack of realism • Dense opposition
- No support for 3D hardware • No support for Windows NT

**41** Undemanding and unexciting



Casablanca isn't noir, but it does have Humphrey Bogart in it.

# DISCWORLD NOIR

★ £34.99 • GT Interactive • Out now

The third *Discworld* adventure is moody, smells of stale whisky, and hasn't shaved for days. Much like *Mark Hill*, then

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** A P266 with 64Mb RAM recommended

## PCZONE CLASSIC

It could be a coincidence, but it seems that adventure games have developed an awareness of their own mortality. The last one to puzzle its way to our screens was *Grim Fandango* (PCZ #71, 90%), set in the underworld and casting you as a collector of souls for the Department of Death. Now, over half a year later, the colourful and lighthearted *Discworld* games have become simple childhood memories, as the latest Pratchett-inspired point-and-clicker goes dark and gloomy.

### WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE ANKH-MORPORK

*Discworld Noir*'s title isn't gratuitous, as the game draws inspiration from film noir classics such as *The Big Sleep* and *The Maltese Falcon*. Although set in the recognisable world of the Disc, all the action takes place on a stormy night, with a constant curtain of rain covering all outside locations, occasionally brightened by lightning. And while it may alienate some *Discworld* fans, the game's references, steals and adaptations from the Dashiell Hammett school of detective fiction are its greatest triumph.

The main character, Lewton, is obviously modelled on Humphrey Bogart's Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe. He's a man with a shady past in the police force – or in this case the Watch – a drinking problem and woman trouble. His humour is often ironic and reflects the cynical, misanthropic and nihilistic view common to noir detectives (and games journalists). (Despite his disgusting raincoat and not-quite-designer stubble, there is one essential ingredient missing from this hard-boiled dish: the yellow-stained fingers of a pathological chain-smoker. A

**“From the first bars of '40s jazz music, you know you're in the presence of pure class”**

cigarette is never far from the lips of any private eye worth his salt, and its conspicuous absence is obviously a concession to the health-conscious, politically correct '90s.)

The game starts off with the requisite femme fatale walking into your office. Pretty soon there's a murder, and you're the prime suspect. There are flashbacks. You meet a woman who broke your heart years ago.

A dwarf with Peter Lorre's voice breaks into your office... Well, we don't want to give the whole thing away.

This time round the graphics are in 3D and really *do* add a new dimension to the series. This is the *Discworld* like you've never seen it before. But while you get a feeling of Ankh-Morpork as a real city with wide streets and myriad buildings, it seems curiously uninhabited. This is partly because there are almost no superfluous characters; you can, and probably should, talk to everyone you meet. It also contributes to the atmosphere, which is dark and tense.

The use of shadow, light and darkness is almost as important as the sound. The magical notes of the downpour of rain splattering against the ground and the crackling of thunder are the perfect companions to an excellent soundtrack. From the first bars of '40s lounge jazz music that open the game, you know you're in the presence of pure class. Each location has its own particular theme, ranging from saxophone-coated dirges to light piano bar-room noise, including a troll Ella Fitzgerald.

### LOSING THE PLOT

All of which provides enough distraction as you try to piece together a complex plot that is forever twisting and turning. If you've seen *The Big Sleep*, you'll know how purposefully complex the storyline is. Clues become a metaphor for the search of meaning and, since noir takes a 'life is meaningless' stance, it tends to become a circular movement, a juggling act to



Ⓜ Horst, the head of the troll mafia.

remember all the leads. You meet gangsters, bizarre religious cults (the answer to why life *does* have meaning is that "20,000 zealots can't be wrong") and even *X-Files*-style conspiracies, ensuring there's always something to keep you interested and wanting to go that little bit further.

The gameplay drops the usual object-oriented puzzle-solving in favour of a clues-based system. This means that instead of trying dozens of objects on everything in sight, the game relies much more on dialogue. Each time something or someone important is mentioned in conversation, you see it being scribbled in your notebook and you can then ask anyone you wish about it. There are pages devoted to cases, suspects and murders, and when you've pursued a lead to its conclusion it's scratched out. This system is crucial to the game, and thankfully it works very well.

Although you *can* ask everyone you meet about everything, it's better to talk to people about subjects they're likely to know something about. This gives a greater sense of using your wits to a logical end, and feels more rewarding when you correctly question someone you suspect, rather than randomly progressing by hit and miss.

At times there is too much dialogue, giving you the impression you're watching a film instead of playing a game, but it's generally interesting enough for you to want to watch it. The feeling fades after a while anyway, because the overly simple puzzles at the beginning get progressively more difficult as the plot thickens.

If you're a film buff or a noir fan, every new scene has you whooping with delight; if you're a *Discworld* fan there are plenty of allusions to the books and even the earlier games; and if you're just a plain old adventure fan you should be pleased there's finally something new to sink your teeth into. If you're all three, then this game was made for you. [C]


## PCZVERDICT

Ⓜ **UPPERS** An all-time rare adventure game • Involving film noir storyline • Great atmospheric music • Clues system works extremely well

Ⓜ **DOWNERS** Irregular acting • Not laugh-out-loud funny • Puzzles a tad too easy to begin with

**90** Adventure games are dead, long live adventure games





Not a pointy hat in sight.



The characters are less cartoony, and all the better for it.



Short cut-scenes link the developing plot unobtrusively.



This is Samael, your piano-playing, blood-sucking buddy.

## WHAT, NO WIZARDS?!

No Rincewind, no Luggage, no pointy hats...

Strictly speaking, that's not true – there are a couple of disciples from the Unseen University knocking about – but if you've played *Discworld I* or *II* it won't take you long to realise that there are some major differences. Most noticeably, the graphical style has been completely transformed. The trademark bright colours and cartoon features of the books' covers, which were adapted for the first two games, have been dropped in favour of a grittier, darker and more realistic style. We've seen darkness in *Discworld* before, in the form of the *Shades*, but never like this. Developer Perfect Entertainment have also taken a bold step by writing their own storyline, instead of basing it on the plot of one of Pratchett's obscenely successful novels. The jokes aren't laugh-out-loud funny, but they have the same distinctly recognisable humour. The puzzles are more finely balanced than the outrageously hard first game or the almost childishly simplistic sequel. We're sure some *Discworld* purists will grumble at the changes, hopping madly from one foot to another, but this is the adventure genre moving forward, doing what it needs to do to survive.

## ALSO CONSIDER

**GRIM FANDANGO** (LucasArts, £39.99) This excellent offering is the latest from the undisputed masters of adventure, and offers a first taste of funeral gaming.

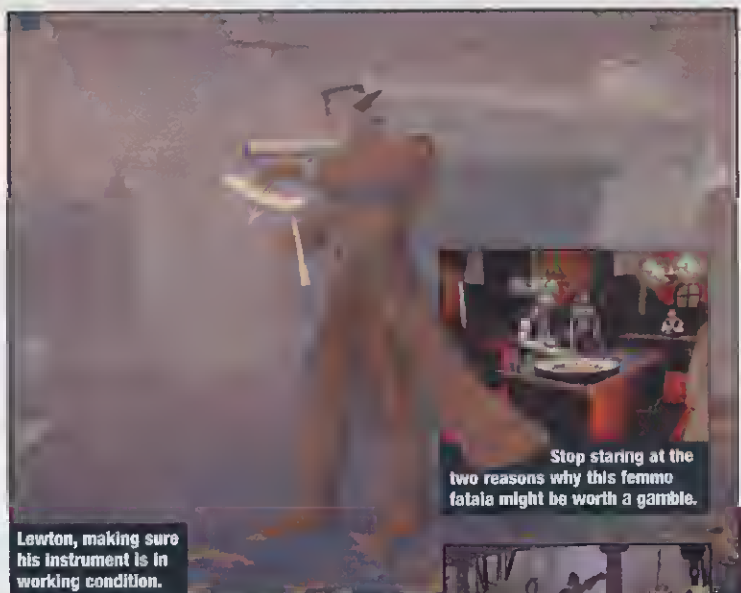
PCZ #71, 90%

**BLADERUNNER** (Virgin, £39.99) Ridley Scott's film is a modern classic of sci-fi noir, and the game captures the spirit perfectly.

PCZ #58, 88%

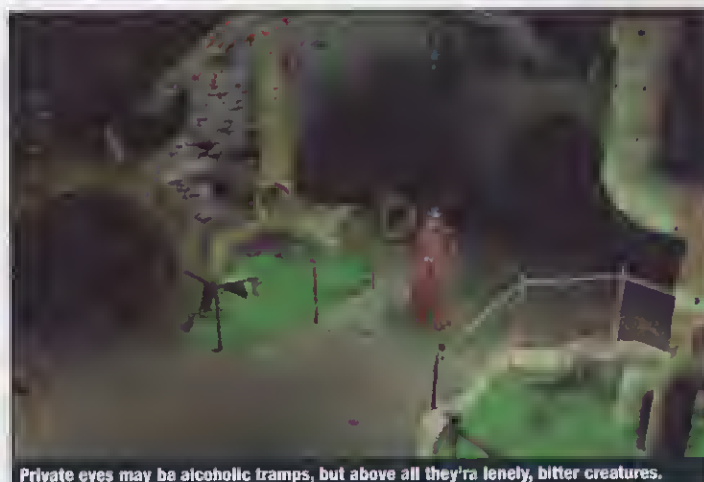
**DISCWORLD** (Psygnosis, £14.99) This is better than the sequel, which felt too artificial and was far too easy. If you fancy a lighter stroll through the Disc, try it out. But be warned: it's diabolically difficult.

PCZ #62, 82%

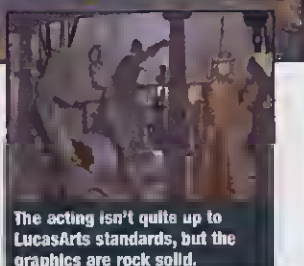


Stop staring at the two reasons why this femmo fatale might be worth a gamble.

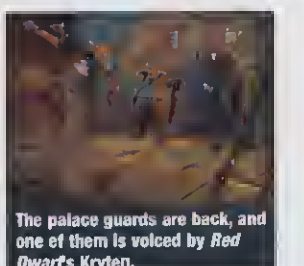
Lewton, making sure his instrument is in working condition.



Private eyes may be alcoholic tramps, but above all they're lonely, bitter creatures.



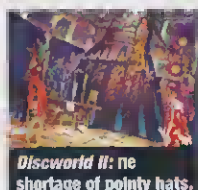
The acting isn't quite up to LucasArts standards, but the graphics are rock solid.



The palace guards are back, and one of them is voiced by Red Dwarf's Kryten.



*Discworld*: colourful but very hard.



*Discworld II*: no shortage of pointy hats.

# fight the power



## mechwarrior 3 pc cd rom

The awesome power of the Mech series continues with new weapons, new 3D environments and whole new levels of utter destruction. Taking the battle into the 31st century, 'MechWarrior 3' will blow you away.



## MEGASTORES



# FLEET COMMAND

★ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

In the navy, you get to see the world. In this naval sim, *Paul Presley* gets to see... well, not very much actually

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D graphics accelerator **WE SAY** A PII 300 would be jolly, and plenty of RAM – at least 64Mb – prevents chug-a-lug

## ALSO CONSIDER

### HARPOON II (Electronic Arts, £N/A)

We're not exactly drowning in naval sims, and those that do exist all seem to be about sodding U-boats. This is the best, but it's really old so you'll be hard pressed to find it anyway. Try the budget section.

**PCZ #18, 70%**

### BATTLESHIP (Hasbro, £39.99)

There isn't much difference between this and *Fleet Command* – you shoot at them, they shoot at you, life grinds on interminably.

**PCZ #49, 70%**

## THIS... IS CNN

Months ago, our eager little eyes were yanked about by EA's press department when CNN used a carefully mocked-up version of the game's Cruise missile launching sequence to disguise their own inability to get a cameraman on a ship during the second Gulf War. Ooh, how we lorded it up that day. "See how sophisticated computer games are? That's CNN, that is. Using a computer game." It was as though a dozen Christmases had come at once for EA.

However, playing the game in the cold, hard light of day reveals just how ordinary the whole damned thing is. For a start the graphics all seem about a year or two old, and the collision detection is downright awful in places. It's not as though there's ever more than about four different ships on the screen at once anyway, so simplified models are just a sign of laziness on the part of the development team. As with the whole game, there's nothing fundamentally wrong, there's just no life to any of it. It's all so dull.

Playing the game, it rapidly becomes clear that no one involved with it was

too clear as to whether they were making an arcade game or a simulation. It constantly hints at both, without ever really achieving satisfactory levels of either. Take training: you're given a run-through of how to control

**“Playing *Fleet Command* in the cold, hard light of day reveals just how ordinary the whole damned thing is”**

the game itself, but no idea of how to control a modern naval fleet in combat. The manual is full of key commands such as “toggle platform range circle” without actually telling you what use the platform range circle is in the game.

## LACKLUSTRE

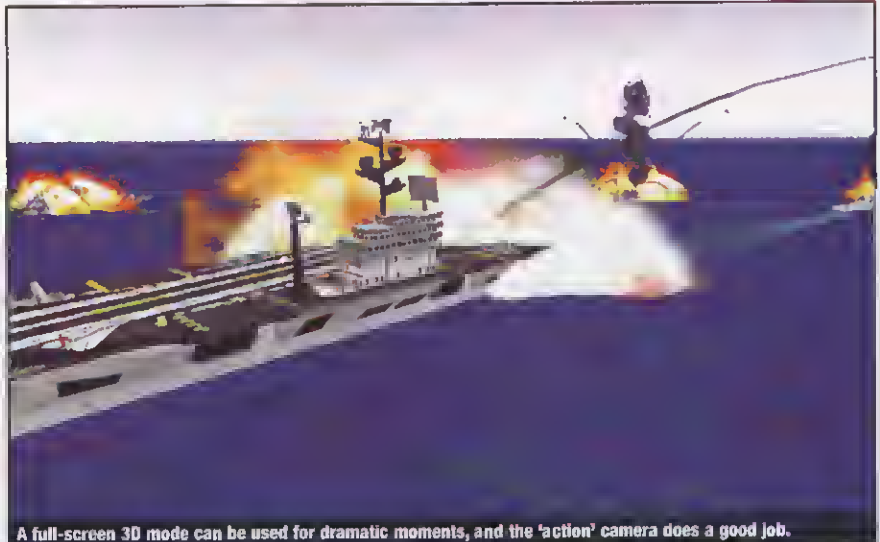
The real clincher comes while playing through the different missions or campaigns on offer. It becomes apparent very, very rapidly that each and every game of *Fleet Command* boils down to clicking once on incoming missiles to head them off, and clicking once on enemy targets to send your missiles back at them. Everything is so automated that you actually *do* very, very little indeed. It really is just *Missile Command* with moveable bases.

Maybe that's what modern-day warfare is: clicking buffers. If so, then why aren't I a General in the Navy, as I was the best *Missile Command* player in my area? But they don't just let monkeys sail baffleships. Not that you'd know it from *Fleet Command*. **PCZ**

## PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Pretty • Good on-screen naval library • Comprehensive mission editor
- DOWNERS Boredom sets in quicker than at a Corrs gig • Graphics hide shallow gameplay • Unfriendly interface does its best to stop you winning

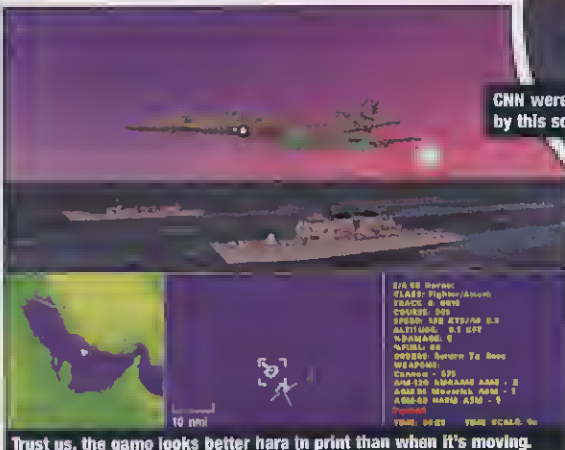
**58** *Missile Command* with knobs on



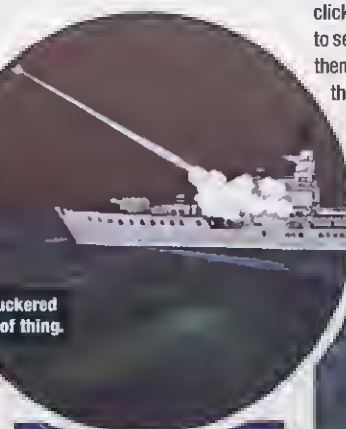
A full-screen 3D mode can be used for dramatic moments, and the 'action' camera does a good job.

The world's foremost authority on modern military hardware, and one of the gaming world's most respected heavyweight military simulation developers have pooled their mighty resources to create... *Missile Command*?

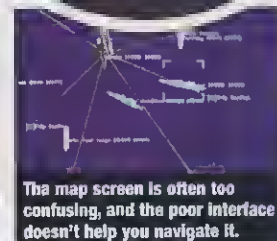
Everyone we've spoken to about *Fleet Command* has had the same reaction. Before they played the game, they were expecting so much: finally, a full-on naval simulator on our PCs. It looks quite promising. You press start... "Oh, is that it? Really? I was, I dunno, expecting more somehow."



Trust us, the game looks better here in print than when it's moving.



CNN were suckered by this sort of thing.

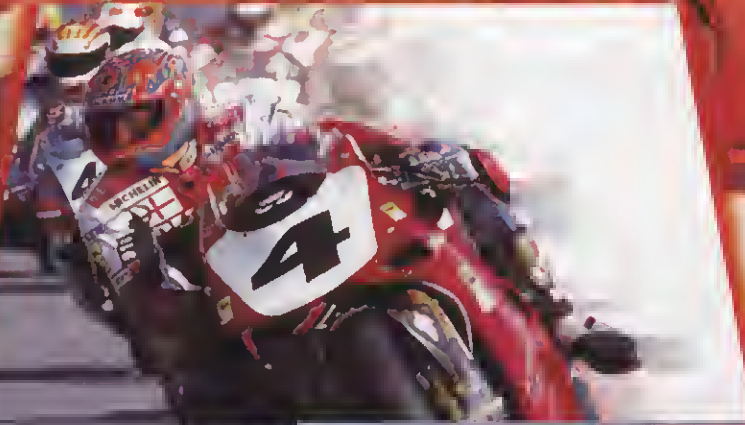


The map screen is often too confusing, and the poor interface doesn't help you navigate it.



Weather isn't bad, but the sea never gets really violent.

# throttle it



**SBK**  
**SUPERBIKE**  
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## **superbike world championship pc cd-rom**

Don your leathers and experience the most realistic and exhilarating racing sim yet with the only officially licensed game of the Superbike World Championship. Featuring totally accurate bike physics and authentic racing circuits and riders, this is a game to test even the most experienced biker.



## **MEGASTORES**



# STAR WARS: EPISODE 1 — RACER

£39.99 • LucasArts • Out now

It looks simply stunning, but is the latest *Star Wars* offering enough to satisfy boy racer Phil Wand?

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **REQUIRES** Direct3D-compatible card **SUPPORTS** IPX LAN-based multiplayer **WE SAY** P200 and 64Mb RAM

## ALSO CONSIDER

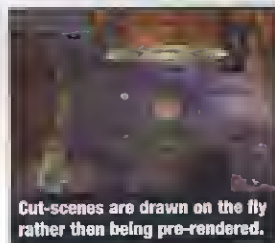
**POD** (Ubi Soft, £44.99) By spooky coincidence, *Pod* is all about Pods, as is *Episode 1 - Racer*. The difference is it's uglier but a whole lot more exciting. **PCZ #49, 90%**

**ROLLCAGE** (Psygnosis, £29.99) Of all the futuristic racing games available for the PC, this is perhaps the best. Moves like a greased-up monkey, only more attractively. **PCZ #75, 88%**

**WIPEOUT** (Psygnosis, £9.99) Virtually identical to *Episode 1 Racer* but a damn sight older. Hmm. **PCZ #34, 78%**



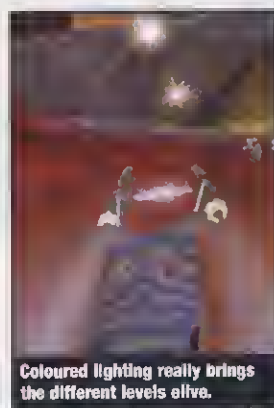
One of the few times you bump into people — right at the start.



Cut-scenes are drawn on the fly rather than being pre-rendered.



Many circuits are in elaborate indoor settings.

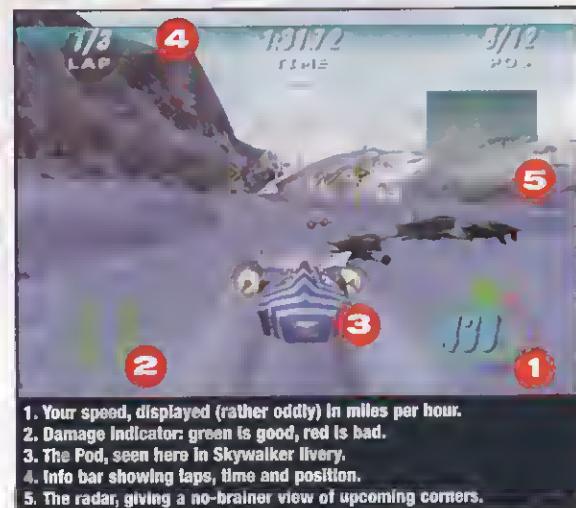


Coloured lighting really brings the different levels alive.



The twin suns of Tatooine sparkle in the distance.

Looking back down the starting grid of the Boonta Eve race.



1. Your speed, displayed (rather oddly) in miles per hour.  
2. Damage Indicator: green is good, red is bad.  
3. The Pod, seen here in Skywalker livery.  
4. Info bar showing laps, time and position.  
5. The radar, giving a no-brainer view of upcoming corners.

**B**ased around a ten-minute sequence from *The Phantom Menace*, *Star Wars: Episode 1 - Racer* uses a proven formula: pick a vehicle, join an event, cross the finish line and then blow your prize money on purchasing upgrades.

The most capable craft available to you is that of young Anakin Skywalker, in the sense that it has no obvious strengths or weaknesses. His arch rival, a cheating bastard called Sebulba, is from the Dastardly & Muttley school of driving. Where Anakin squawks in an incongruously American accent during each race, Sebulba is full of dirty tricks and looks like a cross between Biggles and the mascot for Camel cigarettes.

## PHANTOM BOOTLACE

In the film and in the game's Boonta Eve circuit on Tatooine, Jabba the Hutt can be seen overseeing the entire affair from a balcony like a Roman Emperor at a chariot race. Indeed, the Podracers themselves can be

likened to ancient charioteers, only here they control ludicrously improbable craft. Two massive propulsion units are harnessed side by side to a tiny, suspended cockpit, with a baffling array of flaps and air brakes that pop up and poke out to manoeuvre the craft through the tight turns of each circuit. Every craft is capable of at least 600mph, and pilots sit *behind* the big engines, directly in the line of thrust.

To make things easier than they look, each 30-foot Pod is effectively a beefed-up landspeeder, able to hug the land and its contours like a hovercraft, so you don't have to worry too much about straying off the beaten track. They're also hugely flyable, and you should get the hang of things in about five minutes flat.

There are more than 20 Pods and Podracer characters in total, although only six are available when you start the game. As with bonus tracks, each is unlocked as you progress.

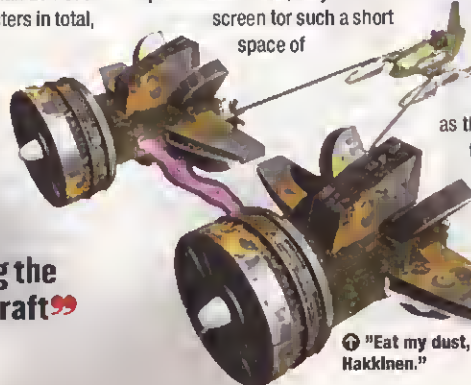
## QUANTUM PALEFACE

Clamber into the exposed cockpit and get ready to dash around 20-odd circuits and numerous planets at breakneck speed.

Each level is set in a sumptuous environment, with dynamic coloured lighting and fully animated trackside objects adding to the ambience. Opponents taunt and jabber in alien tongues as you motor past them (the game contains close to 2,500 individual sound files), and the musical skills of John Williams make the interlude scenes really shine.

Except the game isn't as enjoyable as it could be. Pick a Pod and a planet, and you're stuck way out in front from beginning to end with little to do apart from gawp at the vivid landscapes. If you do stumble upon another racer, they're on

screen for such a short space of



"Eat my dust, Hakklen."

time that it's impossible to see who it is, let alone get into any argy-bargy. There's no limbering up to a daring overtaking manoeuvre, instead you just pile on the boost and shoot past like an Exocet missile.

Your objective, usually to finish fourth or higher, is so easily met that there's never a nail-biting sprint for the chequered flag. Later levels and upgraded Pods help even things up a bit (Galactic grade opposition does put up something of a fight), but we found the gulf between you and 'the pack' to be insuperable throughout. More often than not, you feel as though you're the only one in the game.

## URANIUM RELAY RACE

We'd dearly like to be complimentary about a *Star Wars*

game from a company we've all come to respect, but *Episode 1 - Racer* is mostly icing with hardly any cake underneath, and in that respect it feels like a superficial marketing exercise. In which case we'd rather have a baseball cap and signed photo, please. **PCZ**

## PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Mesmerising speed • Smooth as glass • Visual treats • Eight-player network games • Top-quality software engineering • Authentic *Star Wars* sights and sounds
- DOWNERS** Too easy • Low thrill factor • Little in the way of close action and depth • Overpriced • A virtual facsimile of *WipeOut*

**74** Nice but uninspiring jaunt on the *Star Wars* bandwagon

**"Each 30-foot Pod is effectively a beefed-up landspeeder, able to hug the land and its contours like a hovercraft"**





Well, he seems to have a large polygon under his kilt.

A wedge of spearmen prepared to smite the enemy cavalry.

As you'd expect in Scotland, weather conditions can play an important part in the game.

# BRAVEHEART

★ £39.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out August

## LOCH, STOCK AND BARREL

*Braveheart's* landscape database holds topographical information covering the whole of the UK, say the game's developers, all taken from satellite maps and stored in a 500x50 metre grid

If that doesn't impress you, Red Lemon claim to have modelled the whole of Scotland, England and Wales in 3D using some 650 billion polygons. Add to that the hundreds of authentic towns and villages and a virtually unlimited number of player-built forts, castles and keeps, each with up to 7000 more polygons and, well, you ought to be at least a teeny bit impressed by their efforts.

Start with the Campbell clan, for example, and you can see Loch Linnhe and Loch Lochy from your front door in Fort William. You can climb Ben Nevis or walk north to Loch Ness. Keep walking east (or run by holding down the Shift key) and you can even find Edinburgh. Well that's the theory, anyway.

Climb Ben Nevis — if you're fit enough.



Leaping back 700 years to the days when women were women and men wore skirts, *Andrew Wright* wonders whether painting himself blue is taking things too far

### TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Direct3D and Glide/OpenGL-compatible cards; IPX network, serial or TCP/IP link for multiplayer  
**WE SAY** 3D card or a P300 with 64Mb RAM recommended

## PCZONE RECOMMENDED

**W**e don't get to use the word 'original' a lot here at PC ZONE. We also don't get to use the words 'fresh', 'novel' and 'unique' that much either. But thanks to *Braveheart*, we've blown the dust off the word 'original' and used it at least twice.

To be more accurate, *Braveheart* isn't 100 per cent original, but it is the first game to combine realistic 3D action, intensely detailed resource

management and real-time strategy gaming. Originally called *Tartan Army* and set in the Scotland of William Wallace and Robert Bruce in the late 13th century, the game was started off by Edinburgh developers Red Lemon. It was then spotted by Eidos, who added the licence to the 1995 film starring Mel Gibson. Plus lots of telegraph poles, buckets of blue paint, and scenes of ritual disembowelling, of course.

In the *Braveheart* campaign game you're the leader of one of the 16 major Scottish clans, and proud owner of a single village and a few hundred square miles of Scotland. Your aim is to take over Scotland, one clan territory

at a time, by out-producing, outsmarting and out-fighting your allies, enemies and neighbours in any way or order you choose. Once you've claimed the Scottish crown, there's just the small matter of England to take care of.

### GAME OF TWO PARTS

*Braveheart* has two major elements. The first is the strategy side, a solidly two-dimensional affair where you tell your settlements precisely what to do, where and when. There are ten peasant occupations that go towards harvesting or creating the staggering sum of 42 different products. Half of them are weapons, shields and armour, while the others vary from meat

## ALSO CONSIDER

**THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT** (Eidos Interactive, £29.99) Single-person 3D combat in a fantasy-cum-medieval setting. Has nothing like *Braveheart's* strategy and empire building element, but plenty of blood and guts get spilled.

PCZ #72, 90%

**MYTH 2: SDULBLIGHTER** (GT Interactive, £34.99) Similar 3D combat mode involving armies of different units in various formations all controlled by player-set battle plans. There's no empire building or resource management though, and the game is nowhere near as involved as *Braveheart*.

PCZ #74, 85%

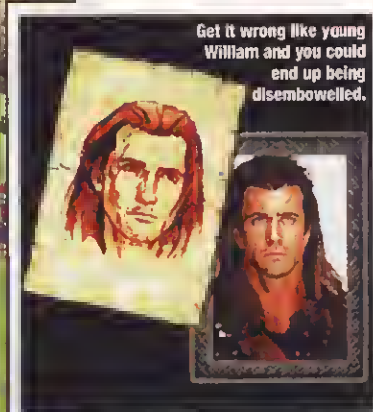




A formation of swordsmen and halberdiers charge at the enemy infantry line.



To get on in the 13th century world you just need to have a castle.

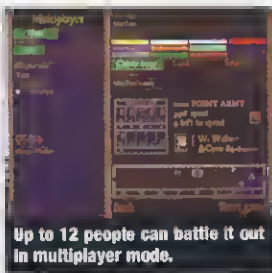


## JOCK'S AWAY!

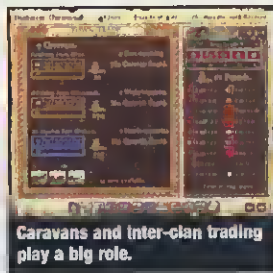
*Braveheart* campaign games start in much the same way, but there's plenty of choice on offer – take any one of 16 clans, four difficulty levels and a dozen or so extra tweaks to give you an edge



Amazingly, even the womenfolk have digitized faces.



Up to 12 people can battle it out in multiplayer mode.



Caravans and inter-clan trading play a big role.



Here you allocate peasants and skilled workers to various tasks.

pies to cheese, bread, leather and wool. You have the opportunity to build more than a dozen different buildings, including prisons, storehouses and castles of all shapes and sizes. You can vary tax rates and even turn out luxuries to keep the people sweet. And, of course, you can build armies to defend them.

Life in this 2D merchant world bumbles along at a steady rate, a kind of pseudo real-time, but pressing the F1 key speeds things up if there's nothing happening – though it's unlikely that you'll need to do so after the first few clashes, as the game becomes increasingly frantic. Gradually you find it's all you can do to send out scouts, spies, messengers and diplomats and stop your clan falling apart. With detections, raids and even the plague, you won't be sitting around much.

### CLAN-TO-CLAN COMBAT

Next comes 3D mode, which really rocks. It gives you a grandstand view of the action and landscape in default battle camera mode as you watch up to several hundred troops slugging it out.

The gritty realism of the hand-to-hand combat and the phenomenal range of camera angles makes it a real treat. You can switch to your leader's viewpoint, look over his shoulder or just float above the melee, rotate through 360 degrees, and zoom in until you see the

expressions on individual faces – or the blood and severed limbs; in other words, you can watch a hundred or more fully automated men hack each other to bits. Just watching those polygonal Picts pulverising each other with pikes is so satisfying it's almost worrying.

As well as simply observing, you can take control and arrange your troops in various formations, such as line, wedge and circle, or order them to charge, retreat, withdraw or scatter. The battle interface is a little clumsy, and while the troops don't exactly behave with parade ground

locations of places such as prisons (from which you can release captive leaders), storehouses and armouries (from which you can nick stuff) before you actually attack.

### RAID IN SCOTLAND

You can manually switch to 3D mode when raiding or just exploring your own town. Raiding's tremendous fun. If your men enter a building, you can grab some of the contents and then set fire to the place.

If you want to play in 3D mode you can turn resource management to automatic. The towns and settlements each look after themselves within the parameters you set for them, such as concentrating on military build-up or trade and so on. However, you can still tweak things here and there in moments of dire necessity. If blood and guts isn't your thing, you can treat *Braveheart* as you would any other strategy game, resolving combat by using the characteristics of your leader and his relative troop strength.

The big problem with the 3D mode is the lack of a pause option. Often you badly need breathing space to get a grip on your men and work out why it's all gone pear-shaped. Another negative is the barely adequate 2D map – it should be the throbbing heart of the game, but instead looks like something from the early Spectrum days. Okay,

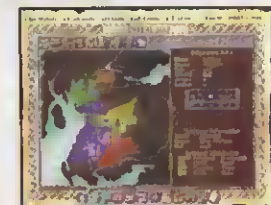
it's good enough to track armies and caravans and remember which town's which, but there's definite room for improvement. The interface lets the game down slightly too, especially in 3D mode; it feels awkward and lacks well-designed keyboard shortcuts. Multiplayer is another disappointment – the strategy side doesn't figure at all, and all you can do is set up one-off scenarios and battles.

On balance, though, *Braveheart* has immense possibilities, even if it's not entirely original. While all the individual parts might have been lying around for quite a while, it's taken a small Scottish software house to pick them up and put them together the right way.

It might leave the independence question unanswered, but *Braveheart* should unite both action fans and strategy fans under one flag. **PC2**



Your choice of clan can make a big difference to the way the game plays out.



Straight from the start, you've got to take a long hard look at the map – which territories will you target, and how? Send out as many scouts and spies as you can to keep track of the enemy – even if they're friendly – plus messengers to start up a dialogue with adjoining clans.



Now switch to 3D mode and take a look around your village. You'll probably find that it's a hive of industry with new buildings under construction courtesy of the auto-manager. But from now on you're on your own. Get out there and start hacking...

## PCZ VERDICT

**UPPERS** Original • Incredible animation and modelling • Open-ended gameplay

**DOWNERS** Stodgy interface • Unhelpful manual • Limited multiplayer mode • No pause option in 3D

**83** Innovative empire builder with 3D combat



# HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

★ £39.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out July

**Eschewing the usual fart gags for once, Paul Presley enters the field of combat**

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P233 with MMX Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Try for a PII processor with a dedicated 3D card and as much RAM as you can muster

## PCZONE CLASSIC

**T**he one-line review of *Hidden & Dangerous* is simple: *Commandos* in 3D. Literally. It's the same basic premise: an elite unit of soldiers working behind enemy lines to disrupt the Nazi advance. It's the same style of gameplay: take control of different mission specialists to achieve distinct goals by operating as a team. It's even got the same level of difficulty: bloody hard. Where it differs most

All of which probably makes you think that *H&D* is going to be a damned fine game indeed. And you know what? You'd be right.

### SIT DOWN, SOLDIER

It's July 1942 and you're in command of a brand new military unit – the Special Air Service (the manual has a pretty good potted history of the SAS and its early missions) – designed to work covertly behind enemy lines. Illusion Softworks put you in the mood for all this right at the start with what has to be one of the most dramatic

lack of any kind of training mission to ease you in.

This may be a personal gripe, but being thrown head first into the missions before you've had a chance to get adjusted to how the different gameplay elements work doesn't help with the difficulty level at all. You spend the first few games of *H&D* basically just dying a lot until you get a grip on how to control the team orders and different types of equipment.



A troubled man, yesterday.

situation you might find yourself in, from attacking hilltops to capturing enemy tanks, all in plenty of schematic detail. The only downside, as was said earlier, is that you don't have anywhere to practise all this before the missions start.

### SOME OF YOU WON'T BE COMING BACK

The only real complaint about the game is the difficulty settings. Just as *Commandos* was a case of trial and many, many errors until you found the one effective route through each mission, so it is with *Hidden & Dangerous*. You will die.

A lot. There was a last-minute decision by the developers to include a savegame feature mid-mission, which is something of a blessing. The first time you achieve an objective by careful planning and precise teamwork elicits such a feeling of delight that you damn well want to save it so as not to have to repeat the whole process when you inevitably get massacred at the next hurdle.

The producers boast that there are many ways to complete each mission, which in a sense is true. It's not an overwhelming sense of

freedom though. Even though your routes from point A to point B may vary slightly from one attempt to the next, you always get the feeling that there's a certain path to follow to ensure a victorious outcome. It's still up to you to find it though, and that's probably where the gameplay comes in.

### LEAVE ME BEHIND, I'VE HAD IT

The odd thing about all this is that you don't actually care that it's so bloody difficult, because the game itself is so enjoyable to actually play. All the gameplay elements work pretty well, from the complexity of the planning screens to the levels of your soldiers' AI. *Rainbow Six* had a few major problems in this area, mainly your troops behaving like idiots at inappropriate times. *Hidden & Dangerous* works a hell of a lot better: small things like adjusting the time scales of your troops' orders so they can co-ordinate attacks, or the ability to pick up fallen soldiers' equipment (from either side), right down to being able to commandeer vehicles (nothing beats driving away in a truck with your men firing at pursuing soldiers from out of the back), and it all gels to make a genuinely rewarding gaming experience.

Which is what *H&D* is: a rewarding game. There's very little wrong with it. The team-based combat genre is really taking off right now, with four or five titles all about to hit us before the year's end. No doubt they'll all be improving on each other with each subsequent release, but *Hidden & Dangerous* provides them with a very strong starting point. Highly recommended. [X]

**“All the gameplay elements work pretty well, from the complexity of the planning screens to the levels of your soldiers' AI”**

obviously is that it uses a game engine similar to that of *Rainbow Six* (PCZ #69, 89%), everyone's favourite team-based special forces sim.

musical scores heard in a game since, well, *Rainbow Six*. Real *Dirty Dozen* stuff.

There is one slight annoyance at the start though, namely the

At this point though, special mention must go to the manual. It's extremely detailed, especially the sections on combat tactics. It covers pretty much every kind of

## ALSO CONSIDER

**RAINBOW SIX** (Take 2 Interactive, £34.99) Think *Hidden & Dangerous* in the world of anti-terrorism. One of the first games to really introduce a team-based combat structure. Look for a sequel any time now.

PCZ #69, 89%

**COMMANDOS** (Eidos Interactive, £44.99) Think *Hidden & Dangerous* in 2D RTS mode. Bloody difficult, but totally absorbing nonetheless. Impossible to play without humming the *Where Eagles Dare* theme.

PCZ #66, 87%

**SPEC OPS** (Take 2 Interactive, £39.99) Take 2 seem to be cornering the market in 'socially responsible' 3D action-shooters. Probably a reaction to the *Postal* debacle. Anyway, this is more team-based special forces tomfoolery.

PCZ #65, 88%

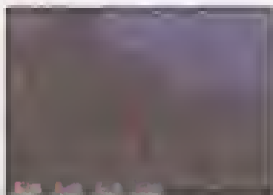
## WALKTHROUGH

## THERE'S NO 'I' IN TEAM

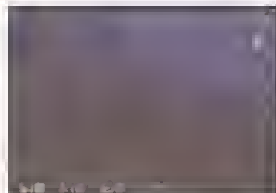
It's all about togetherness in *H&D*. Take the first mission, for instance...



**1** We're those green icons and we've got to take that bridge up ahead.



**4** We'll put a sniper on top of the hill, and use the others to cover the low ground.



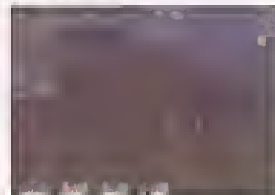
**2** First we send a very lonely scout ahead to see what's in store for us.



**5** With everyone waiting for the cue, the sniper takes a careful aim...



**3** Taking the high ground, we see a Nazi patrolling the entrance to the bridge.



**6** As the patrolman falls, the rest of the team take care of the soldiers. Job's a good 'un.

## PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Engrossing team-based play • Lots of spot-on small details • Vastly improved AI from previous team-based titles • Good atmosphere
- DOWNERS Very, very hard • No training missions • Set-up interface a touch untidy

**91** Very, very hard, but very, very good





After cog in the line of war to his death.



Mission briefings are all in 3D rotate-o-vision.



This'll be one of those purest droplets of atmosphere, I reckon.



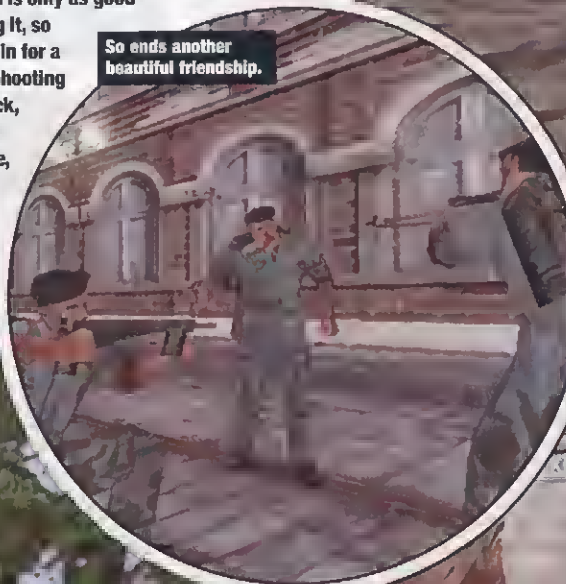
Cover each other's backs.

## SIR, YES SIR

You try giving your mates orders

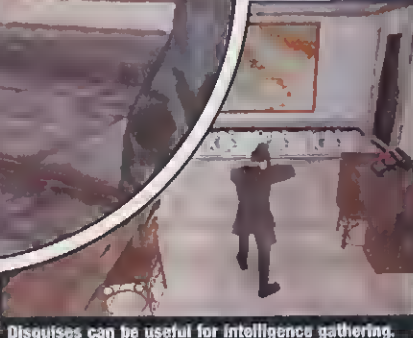
Because of *H&D's* team-based nature (*How many times are you going to say 'team-based' today? - Ed*), multiplayer games are much the same as single-player ones, with the exception of your fellow soldiers being as thick as pig shit (at least here in the *ZONE* office). The host effectively becomes the squad leader, setting up all the equipment and distributing it fairly (cue arguments over the sniper rifle) and then barking out orders during the game. Of course, each mission is only as good as the people playing it, so subsequently you're in for a lot of 'accidentally' shooting each other in the back, mis-timed grenades going off in your face, and the inevitable reduction of each session into four-player knife fights. Sigh.

So ends another beautiful friendship.

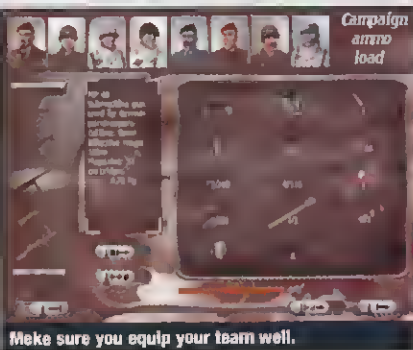


Nice shot, soldier.

Good vantage points are key to survival.



Disguises can be useful for intelligence gathering.



Make sure you equip your team well.

# DESCENT 3

★ £34.99 • Virgin • Out now

**The original tunnel-based shooter is back.**  
**Going underground: Steve Hill**

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb 3D accelerator card **WE SAY** A P333 with 64Mb RAM and a Voodoo2 card will do

**PCZONE  
RECOMMENDED**

It is a measure of the current pace of technology that the original *Descent* came on seven floppy disks and ran on a humble 486.

The year was 1995 and the 360 shooter was touted as 'better than *Doom*' – a bold claim back in the days when a new 3D shoot 'em up was still able to raise an eyebrow, as opposed to a shrug. Since then, of course, you've had your *Duques*, your *Unreal* and your *Half-Life*, to name but a few, all of them considerably better than either *Doom* or *Descent*. You've also had your *Forsaken*, a game that, to put it politely, borrowed some ideas from *Descent*. To put it impolitely, they thieved the entire concept, threw in some fancy accelerated

graphics and gave it a different name. They made a decent job of it, though, and *Forsaken* is surely the game by which other subterranean shooters must be judged. It was fortunate to arrive at a time when 3D acceleration was still quite a novelty, and we might have gone a bit over the top with it, but the fact remains that it walked all over *Descent 2*.

So, to *Descent 3*, the grizzled heavyweight taking to the ring in an attempt to slap down the upstart *Forsaken*. In the early exchanges it looks an even match. Now that we're all used to accelerated graphics, *Descent 3* may lack the visual impact that *Forsaken* had, but essentially they look the same.

In fact, at a cursory glance, a layman would be hard pressed to differentiate between the two games. If the same layman took the mouse and had a dabble, he'd also find that they were very similar games to play, largely involving tearing around huge tunnels like a blue-arsed fly and shooting robots with an array of high-powered weaponry.

**“The vast majority of the game involves desperately chasing the guidebot through vast underground complexes”**

## STORY BOREO

*Descent 3* even attempts to justify the pyrotechnics with some kind of story. This is something of a departure for the series, which previously worked on the basis of shooting everything that moved. That's still largely the case here, but the action is tied to a plot that is at best intricate and at worst untathomable. The *Descent* universe is a sterile, po-faced place and there are very few laughs to be had, with the 15



*Descent 3*, now with added outdoor sections.

chapters covering such areas as orbital network transmitters, data transfers and information downloads. There are a couple of vaguely human missions, such as rescuing a prisoner or escorting a cargo ship, but in the main it gets bogged down in heavyweight techno-gadgetry. It doesn't really matter, though, because essentially it's a disguised version of the time-honoured 'here's the key, there's the door'.



The ever-present guidebot, without whom the game would be largely impossible to play.

In *Descent 3* the guidebot has gone from being a useful gadget to being the most important part of the game. In fact, the vast majority of the game involves desperately chasing the guidebot through vast underground complexes while attempting to fend off murderous robots. Occasionally you're left to think for yourself, with some

rudimentary lateral thinking puzzles to contend with, but attempting an entire level without the aid of the guidebot is nigh-on impossible.

## PLANET EARTH

To an extent, this reliance on the guidebot gives the impression that the game is playing you, rather than you playing the game,

## ALSO CONSIDER

### FORSAKEN (Acclaim, £12.99)

Despite shamelessly borrowing from *Descent*, it carried it off with some style and comfortably bettered it.

PCZ #63, 94%

### INCOMING (Rage, £24.99)

More relentless shooting action, but in a contemporary setting, with planes and tanks and stuff.

PCZ #63, 90%

### TUNNEL B1 (Infogrames, £24.99)

Long-forgotten effort that was vaguely similar in that it involved going down tunnels and shooting stuff.

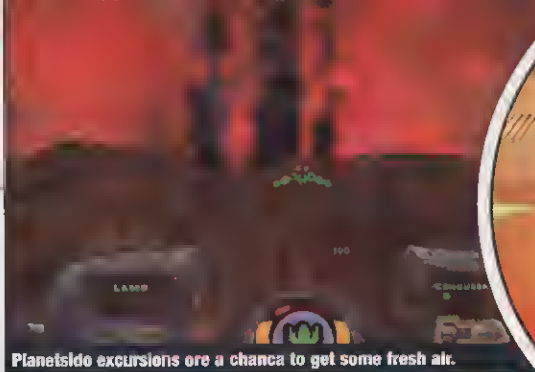
PCZ #48, 73%

### DESCENT 2 (Interplay, £9.99)

The previous incarnation is probably still knocking about somewhere if you want to see what the fuss is about.

PCZ #37, 90%

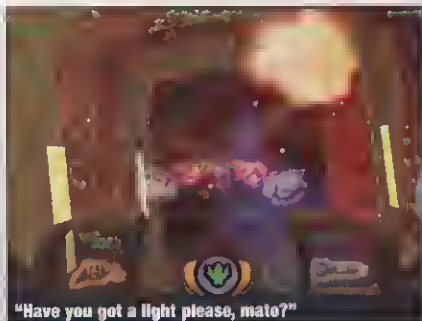




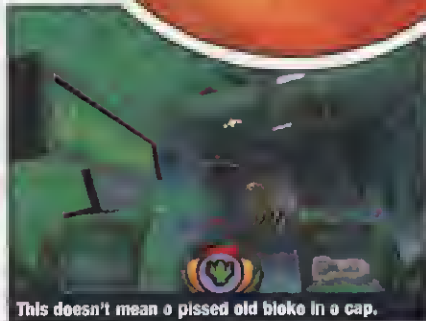
Planetside excursions are a chance to get some fresh air.



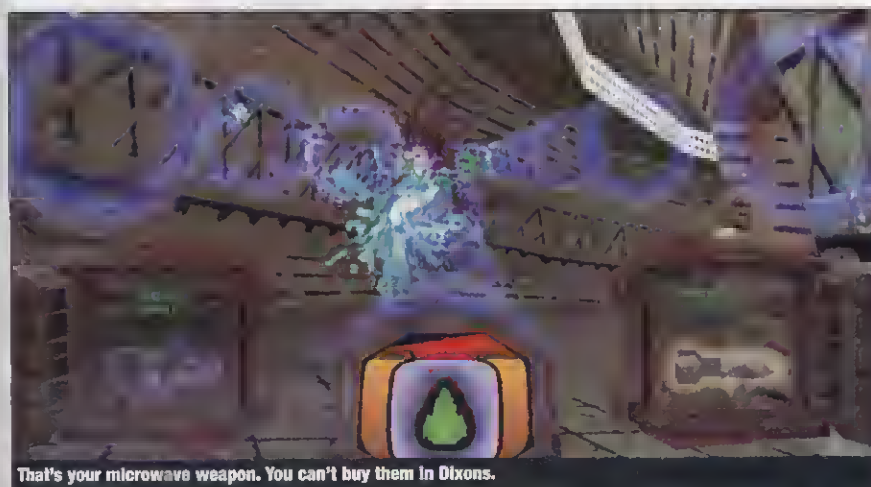
"I think that got him."



"Have you got a light please, mate?"



This doesn't mean a pissed old bloke in a cap.



That's your microwave weapon. You can't buy them in Dixons.



Descent wouldn't be Descent without a bit of love to contend with.



Like an explosion in a fireworks factory.



That's you, that is, looking in a mirror.

although a degree of skill is still required to make progress, with the various levels offering different challenges.

The game traverses most of the solar system, even encompassing a brief visit to Earth via the subways of Seoul. And for the first time, *Descent* has gone overground, with sections of the game involving skimming the surface of various planets, though only vague attempts have been made at realism. For instance, Mars is red, Mercury is hot and the moon is made of cheese. Although purists could argue that they detract from the claustrophobic feel of the original, the surface sections add some variety and actually work quite well, providing a respite from the subterranean action.

Long-time fans of the series will find enough in *Descent 3* to renew their enthusiasm, whereas newcomers should find it an interesting challenge. While it's

never going to match the likes of *Half-Life* for suspense and fear, it does what it does well and is a sprawling epic of a game that sucks you in.

It's an extremely polished affair, with wide-screen cut-scenes tying the action together and giving it a dramatic, cinematic feel, although it does tend to take itself a bit seriously.

So is it better than *Forsaken*? To be honest, there's not a lot in it. If you enjoyed one, you'll almost certainly enjoy the other. How's that for diplomacy? **PCZ**

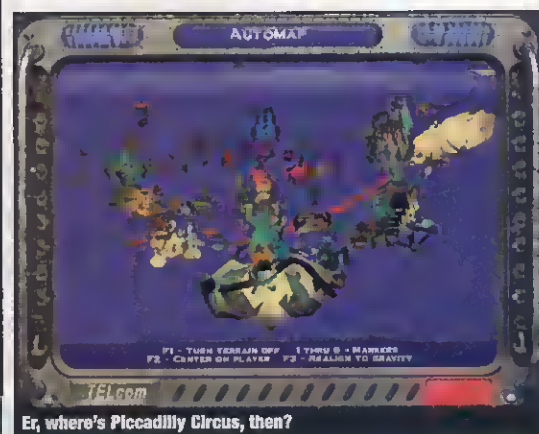
## PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS** Impressive pyrotechnic effects • Vast levels • Cinematic story
- Built-in grabber
- DOWNERS** Over-reliance on guidebot • Still utterly bewildering
- Map sucks

**87** Down, down, deeper and down

## MAP OF THE DAY

A further aspect of the *Descent* games that many players will remember is the bold attempt at creating a map of the levels – an onerous task, given their extreme complexity. The first effort provided a rotatable wireframe replication of each area, which in practice proved marginally better than useless. *Descent 2* altered it slightly but retained the essential factor that it was largely unusable. For *Descent 3* they've adopted a similar concept, but painted it in a variety of colours. And guess what? It's absolutely useless. Cheers, everyone.

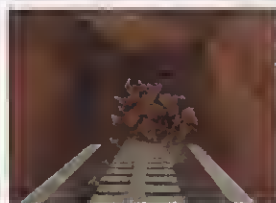


Er, where's Piccadilly Circus, then?

## WALKTHROUGH

### STONED AGAIN

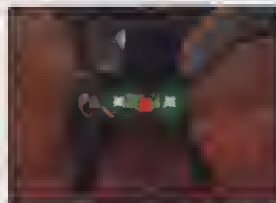
Got a blockage? It's another job for our intrepid Yorkshiremen



1 "Bleedin' eck! Who's put them bloody stones there?"



2 "Ere, there's some kind of buggy at t'other end o't track."



3 "Let's release the bugger by shootin' t'switch w' me laser."



4 "Bloody 'ell! That's cleared it. Job's a good 'un."

END

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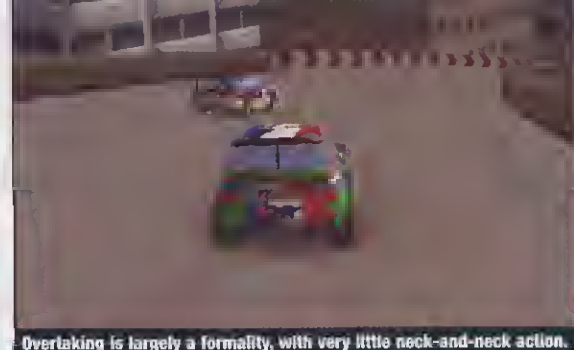
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In Russia's green and pleasant land.



German Tigers try to stop the Russians crossing a frozen river.



Overtaking is largely a formality, with very little neck-and-neck action.

# BOSS RALLY

£24.99 • Southpeak Interactive • Out late July

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P333 with Voodoo2 does the business

Rally games are popular, with pretty much every format under the sun boasting at least one rally-based title. *Top Gear Rally* on the much-maligned Nintendo 64, for instance. Why highlight that one in particular? Because *Boss Rally* is a port of that very same game, with the words 'Top Gear' removed and cunningly replaced by the word 'Boss'.

So is the game boss? No, not really. If ever a definition of 'generic' were needed, this game provides it, doing nothing whatsoever to build on the success of such pioneering games as *Colin McRae Rally* (PCZ #68, 93%). There's nothing to find major fault with, it's just that everything is blandness incarnate. The 16 cars are nameless hollow boxes, and the six (count 'em) tracks cover the same old locales, namely coastline, desert, mountain and racetrack, with only stripmine and lagoon providing a hint of originality. Incidentally, the game boasts that it was made in Seattle, and the rock soundtrack comes courtesy of the unrenowned Dragline. It's not a deal-clincher.

Races consist of starting at the back of a very stretched-out grid of 20 cars, and attempting to plough through the inferior opposition for a top-six finish, with further tracks and cars awarded on a points basis. Driving, such as it is, consists largely of one big powerslide, particularly with the slower cars, and success is often as dependent on discovering short cuts as it is on any kind of automotive skill.

*Boss Rally* is by no means unplayable, it's just that alongside the forthcoming *Rally Masters* and *Rally Championship 99* it's going to look very silly indeed.

Steve Hill

## PCZVERDICT

58%



"Jesus Christ! Who put that there?"



Boss Rally's in-car view is nothing special.

# EASTERN FRONT II

£39.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor Pentium 133 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P200 recommended for comfortable play

## PCZONE RECOMMENDED

*Eastern Front II* is the latest – and the best – in the evolutionary line-up of Talonsoft's tactical WWII wargame series. An updated and expanded version of the super-realistic original *Eastern Front* (PCZ #58, 84%), it features all the rule, unit and terrain improvements that appeared in the follow-up game *Western Front* (PCZ #74, 87%), as well as revised versions of all the extra scenarios, minor nationalities and campaigns from the *Eastern Front* expansion CD *Mission Pack 1*.

But before you dismiss it as simple repackaging, be aware that *Eastern Front II* contains another 50 all-new scenarios and four more full campaigns, making a staggering 148 scenarios and 19 campaigns in all. More importantly, perhaps, there are new multiplayer capabilities so that up to eight players per side can battle it out over the Internet or a LAN, and some revitalising rule changes that really boost the game's flavour.

Some of the best changes include the ability to

set up opportunity fire ranges for individual units, rather than unit types; the introduction of command posts to bring in low-level leadership; the inclusion of boats, barges, paradrops and glider-borne reinforcements in the major combatants' orders of battle; and experimental armoured units like the German Maus, Jagdtiger and Soviet lend-lease equipment.

Graphics have been tweaked considerably, and vehicles now sport different camouflage patterns depending on the stage of the war. New terrain types appear too, such as beach, shallow water, stone walls and high walls, plus new contoured hexside graphics, and improved graphics for paths and railroads. Oh, and there's a new, much-needed option to speed up the human player's unit animations as well as the computer player's.

The scenario and map editors remain as functional as ever, and while *Eastern Front II* uses a slightly different file format, you can still load and play custom scenarios created with the original game.

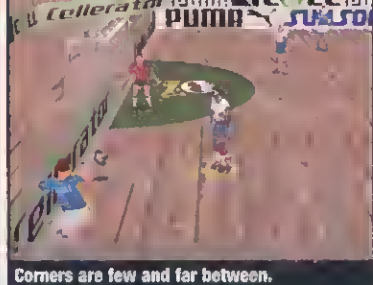
Andrew Wright

## PCZVERDICT

88%

The worlds are huge...half-a-dozen continents.  
There's a central scenario, and more than 70 scenarios on your way across.





Corners are few and far between.



The Puma World Cup Final is played on grass.



Incidentally, the commentary is rubbish.

# PUMA STREET SOCCER

★ £39.99 • Sunsoft • Out now

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P200, 32Mb RAM and a decent 3D card is more like it

Although this initially appears to be little more than a thinly veiled advert for footwear and potato chips, beneath the crass commercialisation lies a reasonably playable game. It does what it says on the tin, and street soccer is the order of the day, with four-a-side matches taking place in a variety of outdoor locales including an airport, a car park and a port. The default players are generically named, and some come replete with disturbing facial hair. However, according

to the manual, genuine superstars such as Matt Le Tissier, Gianluca Pagliuca and Didier Deschamps are hidden somewhere in the darker reaches of the game, although we've yet to find them.

*Puma Street Soccer* might sound rubbish on paper, but it actually works quite well, and requires markedly different techniques to your common or garden football game. Due to the size of the goals – and the erratic shooting method – the keepers are often hard to beat in a one-to-one situation, and greater purchase can sometimes be found in hammering a wall-ball off the hoardings and into the path of an oncoming player. Headers, scissor kicks and so on can be utilised, and

the game also features a so-called 'super shot': once a certain number of shots have been on target, players are awarded superhuman powers culminating in the ability to fire in a howitzer from almost any area of the pitch. However, when the boot is on the other foot, so to speak, it's crucial to keep possession, something that is occasionally all too easy.

As a change from the norm, *Puma Street Soccer* is a devious little game, although 40 quid is perhaps a bit much to ask.

Steve Hill

## PCZVERDICT

70%

# EXCESSIVE SPEED

★ £9.95 • Iridon Interactive • Out now

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** P166 with 32Mb RAM to be safe

Oh dear. Not exactly what the world is waiting for, *Excessive Speed* turns the clock back at least a decade and resurrects the top-down racing game, once a mainstay of sweaty seaside arcades. While it's hardly the most ambitious of projects, Swedish developers Chaos Works have still somehow contrived to cock it up. To the layman, being able to identity your car would appear to be a good idea, if not something of a prerequisite. This isn't always the case in *Excessive Speed* though, with identical vehicles making for major problems in the midst of the action. Furthermore, being able to see where you're going is nigh on impossible, although this owes as much to the limitations of the genre as it does to poor design.

Apart from that, *Excessive Speed* is actually a fairly polished effort, with a number of different game modes providing a reasonable challenge. There's a fair selection of cars to choose from, and some 14 uniquely themed tracks, all of which are also reversible. Power-ups and weapons are picked up en route, and the races are fairly frantic affairs, more than capable of causing thumb damage if played with a joystick. The generic dance music is even quite passable.



A burst of turbo provides some excessive speed.

However, unless they're being paid to do so, no one's going to bother finding this out, as there are hundreds of better games available. At best *Excessive Speed* is a poor man's *Micro Machines*. At under a tenner, it's within the reach of all but the poorest of men.

Steve Hill

## PCZVERDICT

44%

# ED HUNTER

★ £29.99 • EMI/Synthetic Dimensions • Out Now

## TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P120 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** EMI recommend a P200 with 32Mb, and even that's pushing it

**PCZONE PANTS** If you whiled away the hours at school by regularly abusing the odious hairy oik who used to sit alone in a corner, the embarrassment factor of his Iron Maiden T-shirt bettered only by the patches sewn on to his denim jacket proclaiming a love of Saxon, WASP, Satan's Arse and the like, then *Ed Hunter* is possibly not the game for you. It, however, you were that beleaguered, maladjusted freak, you have our sincerest sympathy but you may want to check it out.

A fixed-route first-person shoot 'em up very much in the mould of *Time Cop* and *House Of The Dead*, *Ed Hunter* has you tracking down Eddie The 'Ead, Iron Maiden's intamously inhuman mascot.

Each of the game's levels is themed around artwork from a different Maiden album cover, and is brimming with visual in-jokes for the benefit of the band's faithful. However, *Ed Hunter*'s pathetically limited (not to mention mind-numbingly repetitive) gameplay is the finest cure for insomnia this side of a litre of Scotch.

You do get the added 'bonus' of two audio CDs containing 20 of Maiden's 'finest' moments, but then if you're into the band you'll already own said dirges. And if you ain't, well, 30 notes is a bit much to pay for a couple of shiny, oversized drink coasters, isn't it?

Ted Maul

## PCZVERDICT

6.66%

ents and you choose which way to go.  
missions you could choose to undertake  
the planet.

Francois Lourdin: Senior Production Manager Infogrames

# BUDGET ZONE

It's the end of the month. You can waste your final pennies on beer, or you can choose some lasting entertainment in the form of a budget PC game

★ BEERLESS Keith Pullin



Wargasm: the most playable war game ever to grace the PC.

## WARGASM

★ £TBA • Infogrames/Best Of Collection • Out now

### TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Go for at least a P233 and a 3Dfx card

### PCZONE CLASSIC

The most playable war game to ever grace the PC has gone budget. *Wargasm* is a 3D-arcade shooter that looks like a hard-core simulation – but thankfully isn't. Set across a succession of moodily lit 3Dfx battlefields including Europe and South America, your task is to win each mission by brutally destroying everything you see with a hefty selection of modern-day ordinance, as well as new destructive technologies you find along the way. At your disposal are tanks, choppers and ground commandos, all of which can be zoomed into and controlled from the overall battle map. Most terrifying of all is Mother Nature herself (check out the sound of pounding rain on a soldier's helmet). *Wargasm* is real war made easy, and simply a joy to play. Get it.

PCZVERDICT

92%



Diablo: timeless appeal.



Goblins, demons and gorgeous animation.

## DIABLO

★ £14.99 • Havas/Sierra Original • Out now

### TECH SPECS

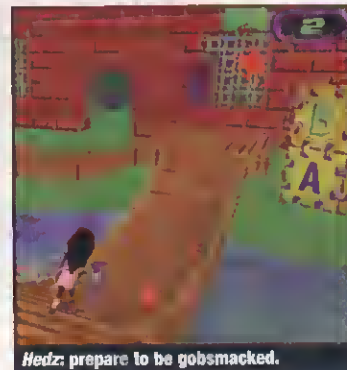
**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A decent sound card helps

It's getting on a bit now, but Blizzard's *Diablo* is an isometric RPG with timeless appeal. A magnificent story makes up for the admittedly repetitive hack-and-slash fighting sequences, and before too long you find yourself hopelessly absorbed in a world of goblins, demons and truly gorgeous animation.

At 15 quid, and packing considerable multiplayer and online punch, *Diablo* is well worth a bash.

PCZVERDICT

78%



Hedz: prepare to be gobsmacked.

### HEDZ

★ CD case £9.99 / boxed £12.99 • Hasbro/Classic Games • Out now

### TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A 3D card maximises enjoyment

### PCZONE RECOMMENDED

What the hell is going on? Is Nintendo legend Shigeru Miyamoto developing for the PC? Obviously not. But if you want a cute, original and downright surreal 3D puzzler firmly in the Nintendo mould, *Hedz* is the one.

Hijacking elements from *Atomic Bomberman*, *Super Mario 64* and others, *Hedz* is a flying, running, shooting, bouncing platform party with a brain twist.

It's Worzel Gummidge gone crazy, except instead of those grubby old straw heads, you can strap on legendary bonces such as Elvis Presley and Muhammad Ali. Make sense? Of course it doesn't – this is one game you have to play to truly understand. So if you've got ten quid to spare, we strongly suggest you get your head round this – you'll be gobsmacked.

PCZVERDICT

83%

“

The principle was to push the player into adventures and experience the dis  
You should feel the action as if you're





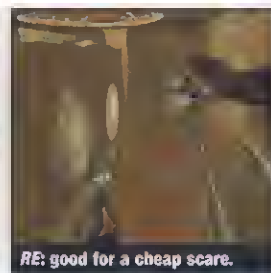
Something for the weekend.



Nicely shaped skeleton...



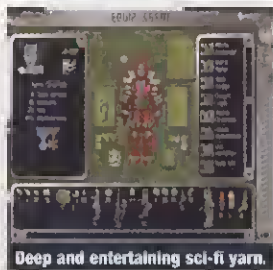
I-War: sensational enemy AI.



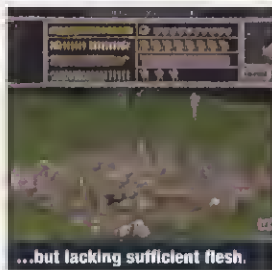
RE: good for a cheap scare.



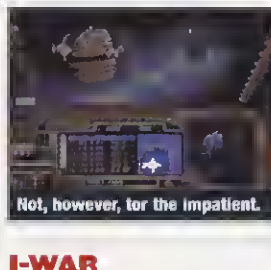
MDK: impressive visuals...



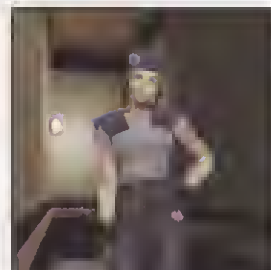
Deep and entertaining sci-fi yarn.



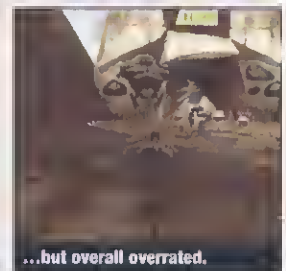
...but lacking sufficient flesh.



Not, however, for the impatient.



"You looking for a good time?"



...but overall overrated.

### X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE

★ CD case £9.99 / Boxed £12.99 • Hasbro/Classic Games • Out now

#### TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P166  
Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 3Dfx card preferable

**PCZONE RECOMMENDED** Is the age of the isometric strategy game over? As much as we liked *X-COM 3: Apocalypse* when it first materialised over two years ago, it doesn't hold the same appeal now. Sure, it's involving, extensive, and can even be quite frightening at times, but when it comes to the crunch, the graphics look dated, and the clumsy interface leads to a steep learning curve.

On the other hand, if you can reach the top of this curve, what beckons is a tremendously deep and entertaining sci-fi yarn with excellent real-time battles and an artfully crafted atmosphere.

Just about worth ten quid, but only if you've got a very long weekend to fill.

**PCZVERDICT** 80%

### MASTERS OF ORION II: BATTLE AT ANTARES

★ £9.99 • GT Interactive/Replay • Out now

#### TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P90  
Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Purdy enough

Lengthy sessions on *Masters Of Orion 2* don't hold the same kind of fulfilment as other turn-based strategy games like *Alpha Centauri*, or the ancient *Ascendancy* (also available on budget), but that's not through any serious flaw – graphically, technically or otherwise. In fairness, all standard strategic elements are well intact, with the research tree in particular showing surprising variety by incorporating not only new ships and new buildings, but also biological functions such as telepathy, spies and mutation. Sadly, all innovation ceases there, meaning that we're left with a nicely shaped skeleton that's somewhat devoid of flesh. Shame.

**PCZVERDICT** 70%

### I-WAR

★ £TBA • Intergames/Best Of Collection • Out now

#### TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P90  
Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 3Dfx? Oh yes

**PCZONE RECOMMENDED** If you're looking for that epic space sim, *I-War* certainly holds some of the essential ingredients. The scope is massive, the plot is twisting, and the enemy AI is sensational, with your toes often resorting to hunting in packs in an attempt to single out some of your fleet's weaker vessels.

Unlike *Wing Commander Prophecy* and *X-Wing Alliance*, both of which are fairly simple games to get into, *I-War* is quite a complex affair. The main dreadnought under your control has four main tactical screens – engines, navigation, weapons and command – making this a galactic confrontation suited to strategists as well arcade junkies.

If you've got a month to spare, it goes without saying that *I-War* is excellent value for money. If you're an impatient cretin, think twice.

**PCZVERDICT** 80%

### RESIDENT EVIL

★ £9.99 • White Label • Out now

#### TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P133  
Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Play in a darkened room

It's old and clichéd, but if you want a cheap scare then *Resident Evil* is the game to play. The atmosphere is heavy, the graphics are spot on, the sound is terrifying and, amazingly (and most importantly), the gameplay is dead tight. When it comes to third-person thrillers, the only other game comparable to this in terms of user-friendly controls and horrendous moments is its sequel, *Resident Evil 2*. Unfortunately that isn't due out on budget until September, so for now your ten-pound horror toss up is between *RE* and the recently re-released *The Exorcist*. Now that is a tough decision.

**PCZVERDICT** 78%

### MDK

★ £9.99 • White Label • Out now

#### TECH SPECS

**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P60  
Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Get a faster machine

Distinctly Shiny, considerably overrated, *MDK* is the kind of third-person shooter where you suddenly realise after two hours of mindlessly vaporising everything in sight that you're bored senseless. The smooth animation, deft acrobatics and general glitzy feel all play an initial role in covering up the linear and slightly monotonous gameplay, but *MDK*'s overall shallowness can't remain hidden for long. Even with its grand weaponry and impressive visuals, what we ultimately have here is a formulaic shoot 'em up that struggles hard to hold its own, and harder still to hold your attention. Disappointing.

**PCZVERDICT** 67%

world he can deeply interact with, live great every of a totally new civilisation.

he hero of some Hollywood action movie,

Oliver Masclef: Project Manager Appeal

# FEEDBACK

Bang on, or bang out of order? Keith Pullin listens to your views on some of the games reviewed recently in *PC ZONE*

## IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC ZONE* over the last few months. Whether you want to sling a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words, and include your name, address and age.

**WRITE TO** Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

**EMAIL** Alternatively, email them to us at [letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk](mailto:letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk) with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

## MACHINES

REVIEWED Issue 77, June  
SCORE 82%

### What we thought

**PCZONE** "Machines is an involving addition to the burgeoning 3D RTS field. And although not quite as good as *Warzone 2100*, it's a solid, satisfying game. However, you can't help feeling that you've seen it all before."

### What you think

★ "Having recently bought *Machines* on the recommendation of a friend, I found your review rather under-enthusiastic. The first-person view (an aspect which you woefully under-emphasised) becomes a central part of the game once you get used to it. In fact, dipping in and out of this view often gives you the edge in key battles.

"I'd recommend anyone to have a crack at it, even if they

already own *Warzone 2100*. The first-person perspective changes the gameplay mix significantly, and as a consequence I'd say *Machines* is the most enjoyable RTS I've played."

R MacReady

### Comment

*Machines* was unfortunate insofar as it was released just after the classic *Warzone 2100* (PCZ #75, 90%). When you compare the two games side by side, it's pretty clear which game is slicker. But as you rightly say, this doesn't mean *Machines* is a bad game. Far from it – it's great.

## EXPENDABLE

REVIEWED Issue 76, May  
SCORE 79%

### What we thought

"If you yearn for a bit of pick-up-and-play arcade simplicity, a shot of instant satisfaction, then look no further."

### What you think

★ "What's your problem with *Expendable*? Are you so blinkered by first-person shooters that you no longer appreciate a good old back-to-basics, reflex-based arcade game? Rage Software rule, and I defy you to show me a better pure arcade game on the PC."

Manu Law

★ "I think you were very unfair on *Expendable*. Maybe your reviewer's concentration span has been affected by excessive exposure to illegal substances and hard-core pornography,

because contrary to what he suggests in the review, I was gleefully hooked through 17 levels of unbelievable arcade action. A couple of years ago I would never have thought such a spectacular show would be possible. This is state of the art stuff and a true milestone in PC gaming. Why can't you recognise this tact?"

J Hunter

### Comment

Sure, it has incredible visuals, but gameplay is more important. In this particular case we felt it was too repetitive to warrant a higher score. As for a better arcade game? Try *Incoming* (PCZ #63, 90%), also from Rage.

## CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

REVIEWED Issue 73, February  
SCORE 93%

### What we thought

**PCZONE** "The sheer scale of this game and the attention to detail lifts *CM3* high above all other tootie management games."

### What you think

★ "The *Championship Manager* series really has hit rock bottom. *CM3* just doesn't have that gripping 'X' factor that made the previous games so utterly playable. Overrated? You better believe it."

Brian Moon

★ "I hate the way developers release a deluge of patches for

"Forget *Carma II*, *TOCA 2* and anything else on wheels, *Breakneck* has just given all other racing games whiplash"

COLIN BYATT

their ugly duckling in the vain hope that it'll miraculously turn into a swan. I am of course referring to *CM3*. The irony is that the first patch actually slowed the game down even further. Bite the bullet SI, and put your efforts into turning *CM4* into the game *CM3* should have been."

Rob Stone

### Comment

Interestingly, we're receiving more anti-*CM3* letters than we are pro ones. Is this because those who like it are too busy playing the game to write letters about it? Or is it that *CM3* really isn't that good? Personally, we still believe it is the best footie management game around.

## QUAKE III (ALPHA DEMO)

PREVIEWED Issue 75, April  
SCORE NA

### What we thought

"*Quake III* will be the biggest game yet to be launched on a 'hardware acceleration-only' ticket. Therefore, as you'd expect, the graphics rock bells. Big bells."

### What you think

★ "The *Quake III* alpha demo sucks. It id release it looking and feeling anything like it does at the moment, then they're going to be spal on. It looks worse than *Unreal*, it plays worse than *Kingpin*, and is about as original as an episode of *South Park*. Yes, yes, I know it's just an alpha release, but the engine is there



*Machines*: The most enjoyable RTS R MacReady has played

"We've created a whole biosphere, with hunters and prey – a complete food chain..."

Francois Lourdin: Senior Production Manager Infogrames



and the idea has been revealed. Frankly, if they think they can pass off a product which has barely progressed since the days of *Wolfenstein 3D*, then they can go f\*\*k themselves sideways with a sharp stick."

*Slog*

★ "Amazing, amazing, amazing. Never have I longed for a game as much as I long for *Quake III*. If the alpha version is this good, what is the final version going to be like? I want it now!"

*Morph*

**Comment**  
Strictly speaking, we shouldn't really be discussing *Quake III* here because we haven't actually reviewed the final version yet. On the other hand, the 'demo' has generated massive interest and is something most people are already discussing. So, Slog, your comments are irritating because: a) the graphics appear to be excellent, especially with the new curved architecture algorithms; b) *South Park* is actually quite original; and c) *Wolfenstein 3D* deathmatch, anybody? Of course not – things have progressed slightly. Think before you speak next time.

## ALIENS VS PREDATOR

REVIEWED Issue 76, May  
SCORE 91%

**What we thought**

**PCZONE CLASSIC** "It there was an award for the scariest game ever, *AvP* would win it hands down."

**What you think**

★ "I've played all three demos (Marine, Alien and Predator), and I think you should have given it a higher score. Just because you can't save the game you gave it less than it deserved. In fact there should be more games like this,

because saving is just another way of cheating."

*James Booth*

**Comment**

Games without a save option tend to infuriate rather than inspire. As for the overall mark of 91% – is that really so low?

## X-WING ALLIANCE

REVIEWED Issue 77, June  
SCORE 88%

**What we thought**

**PCZONE RECOMMENDED** "Instead of mission-based progression, *X-Wing Alliance* is story-driven from the off."

**What you think**

★ "There's nothing wrong with the game as such, but I find that the first chapter is far too hard for a crap gamer like me. The only thing that has helped me survive is the help I got from the Internet. Without this I would have wasted 35 quid."

*Andrew Keeble*

★ "Unless you're really into *Star Wars*, avoid *X-Wing Alliance* at all costs. It takes ages for any real action to start happening, because the game insists on filling in all the boring gaps in the films that nobody wanted to know about anyway."

*J Matthews*

★ "My patience has worn thin. First LucasArts release the mindless *Rogue Squadron*, and then they follow it up with the equally laborious *X-Wing Alliance*. Honestly, I struggle to stay awake playing this current batch of *Star Wars* games. And, worryingly, *The Phantom Menace* doesn't look to be any better. LucasArts have lost their touch."

*Alan Palmer*

**Comment**

What would you prefer – a game that takes ten minutes to complete, or one that takes a month or two? *X-Wing Alliance* is not only well-presented and

coded, it also offers excellent value for money. Okay, it takes a bit of time to get into, but once you're in, you're in for good.

## TANKTICS

REVIEWED Issue 78, July  
SCORE 82%

**What we thought**

**PCZONE RECOMMENDED** "Even when you think everything's under control, there's always something to do, such as scanning the landscape for evil black sheep."

**What you think**

★ "Don't those geeky little programmers understand? If we want to play games like *Tanktics*, we'll load up a bloody Spectrum, Commodore 64 or Amiga emulator. PCs are meant to show fantastic graphics and sound, not crappy, boring old game ideas that went out with the ark. Give me *Quake III* any day."

*I Modena*

**Comment**

*Tanktics* is a masterful piece of entertainment if you can be bothered to spend the time to learn the controls. Clearly you don't have the dedication.

## BREAKNECK

REVIEWED Issue 78, July  
SCORE 89%

**What we thought**

**PCZONE RECOMMENDED** "Essentially, what the developers have done is to make a really good racing game and then cram it with as much nifty stuff as possible."

**What you think**

★ "Oh yes. Yes. Yes! I am having multiple orgasms over *Breakneck*. The number of vehicles is truly unbelievable, and the gameplay is totally awesome. So why didn't you give it a Classic award then, eh? Eh? EH?"

*Richie Boyd*



## STAR TREK: BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION

REVIEWED Issue 78, July  
SCORE 89%

**What we thought**

**PCZONE RECOMMENDED** "BOTF is not only the game *Star Trek* fans have been praying for, but also an essential purchase for hard-core strategy nuts."

**What you think**

★ "If you have to choose between *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri* and *Star Trek: Birth Of The Federation*, go for *BOTF*. With loads of surprises and incidental occurrences, it's one of those rare turn-based strategy games that manages to hold your attention even after that climactic moment when the last technological discovery is made."

*T Borg*

★ "As someone who has a passing interest in *Star Trek* but a healthy interest in strategy, I entirely agree with your review of *BOTF*. The difficulty setting is perfect, the interface is spot on, and the excitement high. Brilliant."

*Ash Small*

★ "BOTF is certainly not all it's cracked up to be, and it was the same with *Alpha Centauri*. Turn-based strategy games are past their sell-by date, and unless somebody comes up with some new ideas they will die a slow, dreary death."

*A Sherwood*

**Comment**

Are turn-based strategy games on death row? Is *BOTF* better than *Alpha Centauri*? Let us know what you think.

★ "Where did this gem spring from? *Breakneck* has appeared from nowhere and knocked me senseless. Forget *Carma II*, *TOCA 2* and anything else on wheels, *Breakneck* has just given all other racing games whiplash."

*Colin Byatt*

**Comment**

Racing games come and go. At the moment this is the best, basically because it's fast, playable and full of goodness. But will it be the best in six months' time? We doubt it, therefore it's no Classic. [PC]





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Heretic II

Realms Of The Haunting

Redguard

# PCZ SUPERTEST FANTASY

PHOTOGRAPHY Phil Ward VENUE Playing Ficks

⊕ L to R: Daniel Emery (ZONE's disk editor and sad geek) hasn't reviewed any of the games on offer today, but has played more fantasy games than you can shake a stick at. ⊕ Paul Presley reviewed *Thief: The Dark Project* (PCZ #72, 90%). ⊕ Mark "No relation to Steve" Hill knows the definitions of both 'action' and 'fantasy' but as PC ZONE's newest recruit has not reviewed any of today's games. ⊕ Paul Mallinson reviewed *Realms Of The Haunting* (PCZ #47, 93%) and *Redguard* (PCZ #75, 99%) which makes him some kind of expert.



Thief: The Dark Project

Tomb Raider III

One of the biggest problems we've encountered while putting these Supertests together is the defining of certain game genres. Sure, there isn't much of a problem with football management games, but is *Heretic II* a role-playing game, or an action game? Does *Masters Of Magic* come under fantasy, or strategy? Is *Hopkins FBI* an adventure game, or a criminal waste of time and money? The boundaries between genres are often blurred.

And so it was with this month's category – fantasy action games. Compiling the list of contenders wasn't easy, since no one could agree what constitutes a 'fantasy action' game. Is *Tomb Raider* too modern to be fantasy, or does the thought of manipulating a large-breasted woman fit the definition nicely? What about *Realms* ➔

# ACTION GAMES

You know the drill by now: a bunch of **ZONE** reviewers, a bunch of games, a bunch of arguments, and the demon alcohol spurring them on. Holding court: **Paul Presley**

◀ *Of The Haunting* – should that mean *Resident Evil* is allowed into the party too?

Naturally the arguments began before we even made it to the shortlist, but eventually we settled on the five here. The basic requirement for inclusion was that it should be a real-time game – not turn-based – and also one that has more to it than just plain old combat. *Tomb Raider III* was perhaps a touch borderline, but it seemed like ages since we used a gratuitous shot of Lara Croft in the mag, so we figured why not?

So, having decided on the shortlist, we adjourned to the nearest drinking emporium and started hitting each other with verbal punches. Tempers frayed, arguments ensued – legal action was even considered at one point – but eventually we came to the following conclusions...

## HERETIC II

**Mallo:** This was a game that potentially looked like being a real winner. Great use of the *Quake II* engine, great architecture, wonderfully atmospheric graphics; a bit beardy-weirdy perhaps, and with a load of spells that are just glorified light shows. At the end of the day it was let down by one main factor – the control system. There was a slight delay when it came to using weapons, leaping around or

whatever. You were a really agile character, but I always found myself falling down bottomless canyons because of the delay every time I pressed jump.

**Prezzer:** That's the same problem I had in *Tomb Raider*.

**Dan:** *Quake II* never had that problem, which is weird.

**Mallo:** It was because of the third-person animation. If you were holding a staff, for example, they'd have to include a few frames of animation to compensate when you pressed jump, instead of just having you jump straightaway.

**Mark:** I just found it really boring. I'd had enough after five minutes.

**Dan:** Yeah, it was just... I dunno, missing a certain something. Graphically it was very pretty...

**Mark:** The animation was odd. At times, when you were side-stepping or turning around, you'd look like Fred Astaire tap-dancing.

**Dan:** More like Joey Deacon tap-dancing.

**Mark:** It looked really stupid.

**Prezzer:** Looking at the whole *Heretic II* line, I was just struck by how 'marketing-led' it seemed to be, as though someone had said: "Ooh, look, *Quake II*'s really good, let's do it in

fantasy colours." Didn't we once describe it as *Quake* in tights? That's all it is, really.

**Mallo:** When it comes down to the game, it just isn't as fulfilling as something like *Quake II* or *Half-Life* or *Thief*.

**Dan:** It's in a murky, ill-defined limbo between an action game and a role-playing game.



**Mallo:** There weren't really any role-playing elements in it.

**Dan:** Well, you had the spells that gave the impression of a role-playing environment, but that was it. There wasn't anything else on offer.

**Prezzer:** It was out at the wrong time as well. Everyone was too caught up in *Quake II* to notice.

**Dan:** I don't think there's really a right or wrong time. When a good game comes along, people will notice it. This just wasn't a good game.

**Mark:** It felt very contrived; it was just running around from one platform to

another with lots of pretty explosions going off.

**Mallo:** It was very linear.

**Mark:** There was no life in the game. The enemies didn't make me want to go out and shoot them.

**Mallo:** I can see who this game would appeal to – people who haven't been playing games that long who want to show

“Didn't we once describe it as *Quake* in tights? That's all it is, really”

PREZZER ON HERETIC II

something off. I don't think it's a bad game, I just don't think it's stood the test of time very well. It doesn't compare well to the rest of the games in this Supertest, but if you're looking for something with loads of frills and little substance then this is the one.

**Mark:** I think the designers thought they could appeal to the *Tomb Raider* market. But the *Tomb Raider* market is pretty much Lara Croft and nothing else.

**Dan:** No tits.

**Prezzer:** Message to game developers: only put women in games from now on.

**Dan:** Women with large breasts.

**Prezzer:** Anyone got anything nice to say about it other than 'it's got pretty lights'?

(Long pause)

**Mallo:** It's not that bad a game,

it's just one of those middling titles that gets forgotten about.

**Dan:** A boring game for boring people.

## REALMS OF THE HAUNTING

**Mark:** A damn playable game.

**Mallo:** It's playable, sure, but that wasn't what led me to complete the game. It was the mix of FMV and 3D sequences, the storyline and the use of cult imagery. It all gelled together to make this hugely gripping and entertaining horror game.

**Dan:** It's similar to *Resident Evil 2*. Very dark and eerie.

**Mallo:** It's a fancy game – a fancy horror action game.

**Mark:** I just liked all the horror stuff. The haunted houses, the satanic imagery...

**Prezzer:** It won't appeal to the non-horror fan though.

**Mallo:** Yes it will. It's the sort of game that will appeal to that curious child in all of us. Lots of secret passages behind bookcases, and so on.

**Dan:** Where the hell did you grow up?

**Mallo:** When I was a kid I used to visit lots of castles with my family, all right? I was fascinated by hidden tunnels, little hidey holes, that sort of thing. This is chock-full of stuff like that.

**Prezzer:** It's looking dated now.

**Mallo:** Well, yeah, but if they were to remake *Realms Of The Haunting* with the *Thief* engine it would be a superb game.

Elves, magic and other nonsense.

## HERETIC II

The least well-received of this Issue's entries, *Heretic II* was hailed at the time for using the *Quake II* engine in a totally new way (ie third-person instead of first). It's a visual treat nonetheless, and the use of magic takes it a step above most 3D action games. Sadly it's let down by sluggish controls and a lack of spirit.

SCORE	PCZ #72, 83%
DEVELOPER	Raven
PUBLISHER	Activision
PRICE	£39.99

A glorified light show.

*Heretic II* is just too half-hearted for its own good.



**Mark:** You can level the same criticism that Prezza made of *Thief* in his review: when you start off in the house it's really atmospheric and different, and then you go down into the dungeons and suddenly creatures are appearing everywhere and it's traditional fantasy land stuff. You're thinking: "What the hell are these doing here? It's all out of place."

**Mallo:** There are bits that remind me of the really good bits in *Resident Evil 2*. Like you're walking past a window and all of a sudden a load of arms shoot through and are trying to grab you.

**Prezza:** Yeah, but I'm not a horror fan, not by any stretch of the imagination, and just the nature of the game didn't appeal to me. I never had that urge, never thought: "Ooh, I must play this game."

**Mallo:** There's a lot of magic involved as well.

**Prezza:** Oh well, why didn't you say?

**Mark:** You get to wear this really pointy hat while playing it.

**Mallo:** The point is, it's not just horror. It reminded me a lot of the *Knights Templar* in places. There's a sort of semi-serious mysticism to it all. The guy who wrote it did a lot of research into the occult and brought a lot of that into the game.

**Mark:** There's a real Dennis Wheatley feel to it, that sort of 1930s British horror. Evil Nazis performing rituals and haunted castles and that sort of thing.

**Mallo:** There's a good crossover of technology and horror, and it creates a good atmosphere because of it. Like there's this one room which is completely dark except for a TV in the corner, flashing static on and off...

**Dan:** Channel 5.

**Mallo:** It's a good crossover of realism and the occult. I like gritty realism in my fantasy action adventures.

**Prezza:** Isn't it full of FMV? I hate FMV.

**Mallo:** I'm not a fan of FMV in games at the best of times, but this is one of the few games that I actually sat down with and watched all the FMV bits right the way through.

**Mark:** It does have some dodgy acting in it.

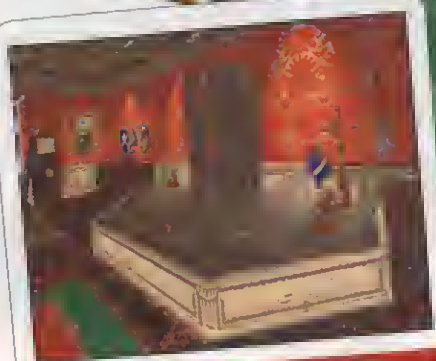
**Mallo:** No, I disagree. I think the acting is very good.

**Prezza:** You sound like you're on some sort of crusade to make us all play this game.

**Mallo:** Here's a thing: the lead



Is *Realms Of The Haunting* really scary, or is Mallo just a wimp? You decide.



# REALMS OF THE HAUNTING

Scary, absorbing and very well written, *Realms* is the oldest of the games being judged here, but it's far from the least enjoyable. Overlooked at the time because of *Resident Evil*, *Realms* is a gem for any fan of the supernatural rather than visceral horror. It may look dated, but don't let it put you off. Try to find it on budget.

Score	PCZ #47, 93%
Developer	Gremlin Interactive
Publisher	Gremlin Interactive
Price	£44.99



Can you feel the terror? Can you? It's all too much for some.

actor in the game...

**Dan:** Is a porn star?

**Mallo:** No, but him and the lead lady...

**Dan:** She is a porn star!

**Mallo:** No, but they both slept together during the filming of it.

**Mark:** Do you get to see that if you finish the game?

**Prezza:** That would be a piece of FMV worth watching.

**Mallo:** Anyway, for me *Realms* is the second best game in this Supertest.

**Prezza:** There's only one slight problem: you can't actually buy it any more, can you?

**Dan:** So why's it in this round-up?

**"It's the sort of game that will appeal to that curious child in all of us"**

MALLO IN PRAISE OF  
REALMS OF THE HAUNTING

**Mallo:** I think you can. I think it's on budget somewhere.

**Dan:** I know some good wAreZ sites.

**Prezza:** I'm still not convinced. Buy me a Jack Daniel's.

## REDGUARD

**Dan:** Now there's a game.

**Prezza:** You're right, there is a game. Tell me about it.

**Dan:** It's a pirate game.

**Mark:** Oh god, pirates.

**Dan:** Yeah, but it's not all 'Jolly Roger'. It's got a really nice feel to it. It doesn't feel like you've

got to put on a frilly shirt and a fake beard and go digging for treasure on a hidden island or anything. You've got to go and kill people, which is always really satisfying in a computer game.

**Mallo:** When I first heard about it I thought this was going to be as beardy-weirdy as it gets. It's from Bethesda, it's part of the Elder Scrolls range, but this is more down-to-earth than all that.

**Dan:** It's also one of those genres that hasn't really been explored. To carry it off was going to be tricky, because if you make it too 'frilly shirts' and 'yo ho ho' then you're only going to appeal to over-40s perverts living in Preston. And if you make it too fantasy based you'll only appeal to bearded perverts living in Preston. It was a difficult balance to find, but I enjoyed playing it.

**Mark:** You're not from Preston.

**Mallo:** Didn't you find it really serene in places? I like the way

that throughout the game the mood changes. It starts off during the day and it's really bright, and you're wandering around while the birds are cheeping...

**Dan:** 'Cheeping'? Try 'chirping'.

**Mallo:** You wander around doing your own thing without any real trouble, but then once you've upset a few guards and town bigwigs, the atmosphere changes and you find yourself creeping around in the dark. I liked the way my own mood changed while playing it.

**Dan:** Yeah, it starts off like a Hovis advert, with all the sunshine and the piped music in the background, and you just want to get on your bike and deliver bread to Mrs Miggins...

**Mallo:** Then later on it all kicks off and starts to get gritty. Not scary, but darker.

**Dan:** It starts off like a Hovis advert and turns into a Tia Maria advert. You know what I mean.





## REDGUARD

Redguard is a tale of pirates, high seas and swashbuckling. Darker and grittier than it might seem at first, the game combines role-playing, adventure and action elements to good effect and is presented in a spanking 3D environment that looks stunning. Too much talking perhaps, but a first-rate adventure.

SCORE	PCZ #75, 89%
DEVELOPER	Bethesda Softworks
PUBLISHER	Virgin Interactive
PRICE	£39.99



Redguard – the first decent pirate game since Monkey Island.

Swashing and buckling and no homo-erotic subtext in sight.



**Prezzer:** No.

**Mark:** The third-person perspective works well. Better than *Heretic II*s. The characters are bigger, so you think that it might take up too much of the screen and look really stupid, but it doesn't.

**Prezzer:** It does have the inherent control problems that third-person games like *Tomb Raider III* have, and it can come across like a glorified platform game at times.

**Mallo:** There's not a lot of that. You're free to just roam around this whole island.

**Dan:** I wasn't too taken with the graphics. They looked a bit simplistic.

**Mallo:** Well, I was running at 1024x768.

**All:** (Much mocking)

**Dan:** You want to run it in real resolutions.

**Prezzer:** Men's resolutions.

**Mallo:** I did. Even at lower resolutions I thought they looked way above average.

**Dan:** They weren't bad but they could have been spruced up. I preferred the look of *Heretic II*.

**Mallo:** Sure, there are elements of the environment that are better in *Heretic II*. Physically, the *Quake*

II engine is better than the X-Engine, certainly.

**Prezzer:** It hasn't got the atmosphere of *Thief* though. You never feel as though you're really there, like you do with *Thief*'s atmosphere.

**Mallo:** I think that's got something to do with the perspective you play it from. You're more detached when you play in third-person.

**Mark:** You're in control of someone else rather than you being that person.

**Mallo:** And you can see more of what's around you – more of the danger – in third-person, so it's a less stressful game. Having said that, there were occasions when I was getting a bit concerned.

**Dan:** You're such a nonce.

**Mallo:** That's the whole reason for playing games though.

**Mark:** If you don't get involved, what's the point of playing them? It doesn't matter what emotion it brings out as long as it brings out something in you.

**Dan:** Rage is the usual one.

**Mallo:** I felt very involved while playing *Thief*, yeah. It was very tense. With *Heretic II* I wasn't there.

**Dan:** You could complete it while smoking a cigarette.

**Mallo:** *Redguard* made me feel

more involved than I did with *Heretic II* but less so than with *Thief*.

**Dan:** *Thief* was the only one I got involved with. With all the rest I was just 'playing a game'.

**Prezzer:** There's far too much talking in it.

**Mallo:** The conversation elements made it borderline RPG/adventure for me. It can get very deep – too deep, to be honest. Too many lines of conversation to pursue.

**Prezzer:** Adventure games are always being criticised for that. Once you start talking, all you do for the next half an hour is click, wait, click, wait, click, wait...

**Mallo:** Initially that's what was happening here. When you start off there are a lot of people to meet and a lot of ducks to break. But once you've broken those ducks and met everyone it all starts to flow better.

**Dan:** Is that a northern expression?

**Prezzer:** There's a lot of violence towards animals, you mean?

**Mallo:** Twats. What I mean is that you start with about 20 people to meet, all of which have five or six different topics of conversation, and then they all branch off even further. It's very extensive.

**Prezzer:** I'll admit I do like games where you can just wander around at your own free will and do whatever you like, with the world only reacting when you start kicking things off.

**Dan:** I was wandering around at first, just starting fights all the time, to see what would happen, and the guards did behave realistically. If you ran off and then encountered them later, they'd go:

**Mark:** It's just lacking two things: a flawless

combat system and, er... oh, I've forgotten what the second thing was.

**Dan:** You need a drink. Go and get them in.

**Mallo:** Yeah, I got the last ones. (Argument ensues...)

## THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

**Mallo:** It's not called *The Dark Project* for nothing. Excellent use of light and shadow, it forces you to use the shadows to your advantage. Graphically it's very, very good. It's an excellent alternative to the usual runaround, *Quake-y*, shooting-people-in-the-face-with-a-double-barrelled-shotgun game.

**Mark:** *Quake* for intellectuals.

**Prezzer:** The sound was the big thing. Looking Glass were making a lot of, er, noise about the use of sound in the game.

**Mallo:** I love the eerie silences and the use of footsteps, the way walking on different surfaces and the speed of your movement all affects the sound, and how the NPCs react to the noises you make.

**Dan:** Also, it hasn't got any music, which is great because most 3D games really turn up the soundtrack. It wouldn't have worked here.

**Mallo:** The intro had a wicked piece of trip-hop though.

**Prezzer:** The intro was very stylish.

**Mallo:** It was like a Massive Attack video.

**Dan:** I just skipped it and went straight to the game. I couldn't give a toss.

“It starts off like a Hovis advert and turns into a Tia Maria advert. You know what I mean”

DAN PUTS REDGUARD INTO PERSPECTIVE





**Prezzer:** You're one of those odd people though.

**Mallo:** I think 'sinister' is the key word for *Thief*. The whole atmosphere is sinister and dark and brooding, and the sound adds a lot to that.

**Dan:** The whole point about the game is that you're an anti-hero. You're not a good guy, you go around stealing stuff.

**Prezzer:** Another game to please the moral majority.

**Dan:** Yeah, but it's still a good game. It really grips you, and very few of these types of game really do that.

**Mallo:** It makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. In places.

**Dan:** Yeah, but I got the earthing sorted out on my plugs so I was alright.

**All:** (Laughter)

**Dan:** But yeah, the atmosphere is good. You find yourself wanting to go around the next corner, and saying "Bollocks!" when you get caught.

**Mallo:** I found myself *not* wanting to go around each corner, but to stay where I was. I'd be crouching in a corner, taking a piss, and the guards would get very close to you and not notice you. There were some very tense moments like that.

**Mark:** They'll pass right in front of you, even look right at you and not see you.

**Mallo:** I remember one moment when I was in a room full of guards, hiding in a dark corner because I couldn't find a way to knock out the rest of the lights,

when one of them heard me. So you get all the "Did you hear something?" and "What was that over there?" and they all started walking towards me. I was shaking, primed on the mouse

leeway though. If it was really harsh, and you were spotted hanging about all the time, then it would lose its edge and be far more difficult than it is. I think they got the balance just right.

**Prezzer:** What about the intensity

**"A superb game with only a few little niggles that probably won't affect most people anyway"**

PREZZER CLEARLY LIKES THIEF

factor? There have only been two games that have been so intense that after 20 minutes or so you have to turn away from the screen as it just becomes too much to handle. The only other game like that recently is *Half-Life*.

**Mark:** Yeah, you can't play it for any real length of time.

Once you've failed a mission a few times you can't go right back to it.

You really do need a break.



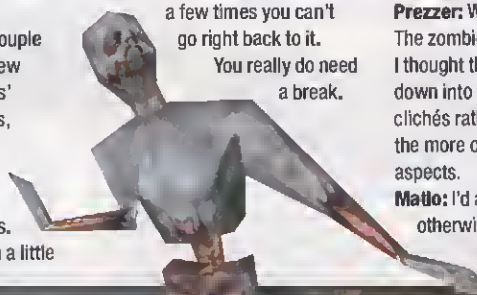
button ready to hack away as they came really close, when they said "Oh, it must be nothing," and turned away. It was just really, really tense.

**Dan:** All you could hear was... (makes a high-pitched farting noise)

**Mallo:** It was the sound of pants being tilted.

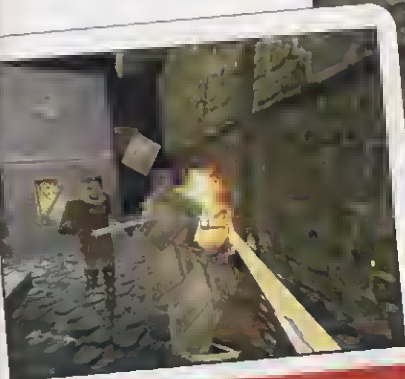
**Prezzer:** Charlie made a couple of good points in the preview (PCZ #70) about the guards' pantomime-style reactions, and hacking Jim Davidson's legs off below the knee. They can be a bit unrealistic at times.

**Mallo:** It needs to give you a little



Midnight mass - *Thief: The Dark Project* style.

Dwight Yorke celebrates the treble in style.



## THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

The first 'sneak 'em up' (unless you count *They Stole A Million* on the ZX Spectrum), *Thief* blew everyone away with its superbly engrossing atmosphere. The Dark engine can next be seen in *System Shock 2*, while *Thief* itself is due for a reissue in a 'Gold' edition any day now. A data disc and a sequel are on the way.

SCORE	PCZ #72, 90%
DEVELOPER	Looking Glass Studios
PUBLISHER	Eidos Interactive
PRICE	£44.99

One of the most engrossing and absorbing games of recent times.

**Dan:** Girls.

**Mark:** I remember the point I was most scared was with the zombies. I remember reading in the review that there were zombies in it, but I hadn't come across any yet, and I was in this mine area when I saw a dead body on the floor. I went up to it to investigate, and when it jumped up in front of me I jumped up about half a mile.

**Mallo:** It can be quite a stressful game to play. I'm used to just piling into rooms with guns blazing, but you can't do that here.

**Mark:** There aren't many other games where stealth is the key thing.

**Dan:** You've got all the *Spec Ops*-style games...

**Mark:** I kind of prefer to kill people by sniping, by shooting an arrow from a distance, rather than just wading into a room and shooting everybody up.

**Prezzer:** What about bad points? The zombies didn't work for me. I thought they dragged things down into the traditional fantasy clichés rather than focusing on the more original thievery aspects.

**Mallo:** I'd agree with that, but otherwise it's flawless. I love the control system.

The training missions are great.

**Prezzer:** No they're not. The training is pretty ordinary, actually. One assault course and that's it. No real training in the art of being a thief. It was just an interactive manual, nothing more.

**Dan:** If training goes on too long you get bored.

**Prezzer:** Well you could have the option to skip it.

**Mallo:** It's not as detailed as *Half-Life*'s hazard course, but it does enough to get you going. You then learn from your mistakes as you go along. My biggest problem was that you have to keep saving far too often. Every time I went around a corner I'd find myself saving the game in case I got caught. Or maybe I'm just a pussy.

**Prezzer:** You do realise this is starting to read like we're all a bunch of girls.

**Dan:** Not me, I'm tough.

**Mallo:** To be honest, throughout all these Supertests I'm the one who's turned out to be the biggest pussy. Every single game genre scares the hell out of me.

**Prezzer:** So, to sum up. *Thief* is a superb game with only a few little niggles that probably won't affect most people anyway, and Mallo is a pussy. Okay?

**Dan:** Yeah.

**Mark:** Sure.

**Mallo:** Eh?

**Prezzer:** In closing then, let me just ask this: does anyone else think the zombies all look like Dwight Yorke?

**All:** No

## TOMB RAIDER III

**Dan:** I really hate this game.

**Mallo:** Controversial.

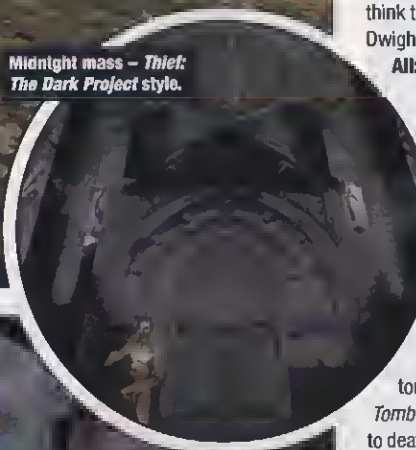
**Prezzer:** But it's "The Best Thing Ever™". It's got Lara Croft. It's got Lara's butt. How can you hate it?

**Dan:** I like my women real, for a start. But the whole *Tomb Raider* thing has been done to death now, and I no longer see the attraction. The first one was just pointy tits running around and jumping, and all they've done since is made her look better. It's still the same game as I and II.

**Prezzer:** So does that mean you won't be looking forward to *Tomb Raider IV*?

**Dan:** I couldn't give a monkey's.

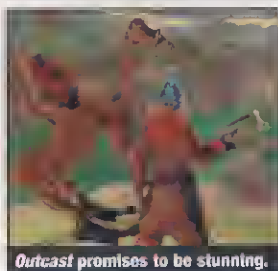
**Mallo:** That's a bit harsh. And I don't think it's as bad as you say. But of all the games we're looking at here today, with the exception of *Heretic II*, this is the one I'd be least likely to return to.





## TOMORROW'S WORLDS

Is it all over for the fantasy action genre?



Outcast promises to be stunning.



Soulbringer – less action based.



A girl and her Drakan (groan).

As we career headlong towards the global catastrophe that is the millennium, the one thing that's becoming most clear is that game genres are converging. As adventure games mutate into fully-blown 3D worlds, and RPGs start employing more lessons from the world of first-person shooters, the fantasy action game is slowly becoming lost.

Had forthcoming titles such as *Drakan: Order Of The Flame*, *Soulbringer* and *Outcast* been released a year ago, they would have slotted easily into this category. But as they include more and more adventuring elements, so the whole situation becomes confused. Games such as *Tomb Raider IV* and the forthcoming port of *Metal Gear Solid* might still vaguely fit the bill, but it's becoming less clear with every new title. We may have to resign ourselves to the fact that this is a passing genre.

## FANTASY ISLANDS

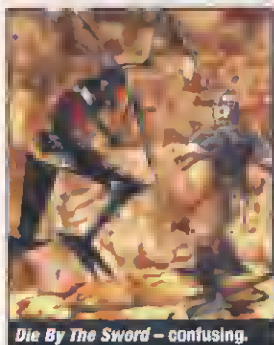
The games that almost made it but didn't

As we said at the start, there was much debate as to just what constituted a fantasy action game. The biggest problem was in overcoming the 'dungeons and dragons' image that the category conjures up. Games such as *Deathtrap Dungeon* and *Die By The Sword* were natural considerations, but were rejected due to being flawed in too many departments. *DD* was just too clumsy to work, while *Die's* unique mouse/sword interface – though novel, and a bold attempt to try something new – stunk up the place big-time.

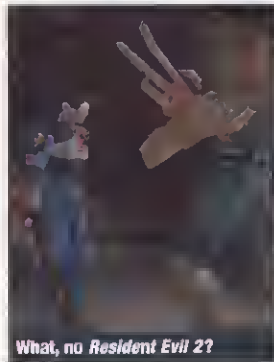
Away from the prancing elven folk worlds, *Bioforge* was briefly mulled over, then thrown to one side for being too old (yeah, we're against. You wanna make something of it?), while *System Shock* was deemed to be too much of an RPG.

Then someone said *Resident Evil 2*, and the shouting began – *It's Realms Of The Haunting* is allowed, why not Capcom's zombiefest? Generally we felt it was too arcade-like to stand up against the other games in the test, but it took Malto some time to finally let go and make do with *Realms*.

The other bone of contention was *King's Quest: Mask Of Eternity*. Rejected mainly because it had already been in the adventure games round-up a few issues back, the argument still held that because it was much more action-orientated it could count here. No dice, and my own personal campaign was quickly shot down in flames. Oh well.



Die By The Sword – confusing.



What, no Resident Evil 2?

## FANTASTICALLY BAD

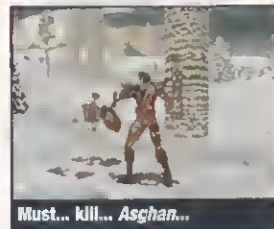
Run for the hills while you still can

Once again, because of the precarious nature of the genre, deciding which games should be laughed at in a derisory manner wasn't easy. Notable candidates such as the aforementioned *Deathtrap Dungeon* weren't as bad as their reputation would have us believe, but they still wouldn't get invited to any parties in a hurry. However, real stinkeros included *Montezuma's Return* (stupid), *DDT* (a let-down after so much hype) and *Nightmare Creatures* (pointless).

However, even they all pale when compared to the stunning awfulness that is *Asghan: The Dragon Slayer*. An average review back in April (PCZ #75, 50%) was perhaps the most it could ever have hoped for. Repeated playing of the game since has shown that the only thing worse than *Asghan* would be a sequel. Silmarils be warned: if you even consider it, we'll run you out of town like common pygmies.



DDT was a major let-down.



Must... kill... Asghan...

**Mark:** There's no point playing it if you've already got I and II.

**Mallo:** That's harsh as well.

**Dan:** What does it offer that's any different?

**Mallo:** Well there are the vehicles, for a start. I know there were vehicles in II, but not to the same extent.

**Dan:** So you get a jeep. Woo hoo! I really don't see what the morbid fascination is that people have about this game. Obviously it's got major backing, and all three have been top sellers, and no doubt *Tomb Raider IV* will be as well, but even so...

**Mallo:** It's got a lot going for it though. The environments are huge this time around. Much bigger. And a lot more exteriors. There weren't so many exteriors in the last one.

**Prezzer:** There was Venice, and a fair number of wilderness locations, but not too many cities. Was London in the third one?

**Mark:** You see, they all start to blend in after a while. There's no difference between them.

**Dan:** With most game sequels, you want something where the essence of the original is there but the overall game is totally different. You want something new, yet familiar. With *Tomb Raider II* and *III*, the graphics are better, the environments are bigger and you've got a few vehicles, but fundamentally the gameplay is exactly the same.

**Prezzer:** But if fundamentally the gameplay is the same as the first, then surely it should be a good game, since we all liked *Tomb Raider I*?

**Dan:** I didn't.

**Mallo:** I don't agree with Dan's view. *Tomb Raider I* – big 'wow' factor. Great graphics for the time, and you got to control a girl with a big pair of jugs. The novelty factor was still sort of there with *Tomb Raider II*. But neither of those two games are the same as *Tomb*

are loads of elements that just work really well. The aiming system is really good. The agility of the character is really good. If you play the game long enough and it becomes really intuitive, then you enjoy pulling off moves like leaping behind a tiger and shooting it. It becomes very satisfying when you attempt a move and pull it off.

**Mark:** The best part of the game is when you find a pool of water and go swimming.

**Mallo:** That's just because you can look right up her...

**Prezzer:** (Coughs) Anyone else want to comment?

**Mark:** It's more important as an event than just a game. The impact it's had in the public eye is amazing.

**Prezzer:** It's got more 13-year-olds playing games, for a start.

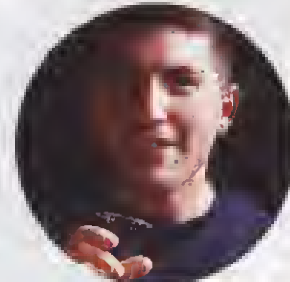
**Dan:** Yeah, but it's now being sold purely on its hype and not on the game's actual merits, which is fundamentally wrong. Unless they do something radically different with *Tomb Raider IV*, something to modernise it, then I think they can kiss the series goodbye.

**Prezzer:** The sales figures for *Tomb Raider III* weren't exactly through the roof, were they?

**Mallo:** Eidos aren't necessarily going to change anything, because they feel that they've got a winning formula. It's selling by the bucketload on the PlayStation.

**Prezzer:** This is boiling down to an argument of creativity versus productivity. Remember, other than *Championship Manager* this is really the only cash cow Eidos have.

**Dan:** But if you look at the differences between *CM2* and *CM3*, they made major improvements. They could easily have sat on their hands and just carried on releasing updated versions like *CM 97/98*, but *CM3* felt like a totally different game. There was so much more to it, so many new elements. *Tomb Raider*



**"It's more important as an event than just a game. The impact it's had in the public eye is amazing"**

MARK ON *TOMB RAIDER III*

III is just the same game as before but bigger.

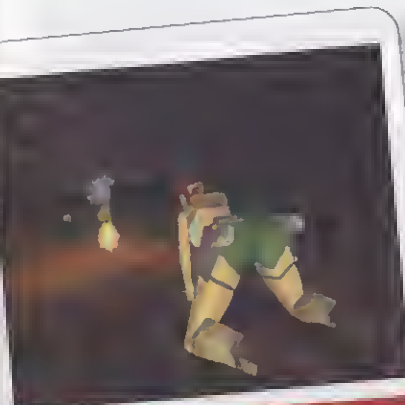
**Prezzer:** I mean, I don't like it that much either. I'm not as opposed to it as Dan, but I've played enough of it to know that I don't have any real incentive to go back to it.

*Raider III*. This time there's far more to do and see. You get to kill humans, for a start.

**Mark:** Fewer animals, yeah.

**Mallo:** It does have its plusses. Okay, at the end of the day it's a glorified platform game, but there



**TOMB RAIDER III**

Bigger than the previous two games (in every sense), with more weapons, costumes and vehicles – there's even a level set in London. It may be getting a touch repetitive in the gameplay department, but you can't ignore Lara's mass-market appeal.

PCZ #72, 91%

SCORE

Core Design

DEVELOPER

Eidos Interactive

PUBLISHER

£34.99

PRICE

**Malto:** You think it's becoming the gaming equivalent of Oasis? Gaming by numbers?

**Dan:** It's more like the gaming equivalent of B\*Witched or Steps.

**Malto:** Remember, the majority of hard-core gaming critics like us are sitting around wondering

what can possibly be done to *Tomb Raider IV* to make it appeal to us, when really it's not aimed at us. It's aimed at a much more casual kind of gamer. Hence the popularity in the outside world.

**Dan:** I don't think that argument holds much water, since the larger gaming audience are becoming more hardened gamers now. They've been weaned on consoles, but now they're growing up and getting more advanced machines and more refined tastes.

**Prezzer:** We're starting to drift. Let's focus on the actual game.

**Malto:** My only real problem with it is that it's too bloody nice.

**Dan:** You mean you weren't scared by it?

**Mark:** Makes a change.

**Malto:** I mean it suffers from the

perennial 'Freddie Krueger syndrome'. The first *Nightmare On Elm Street* film was great, and really scary and gritty, but the subsequent films have lost the shock value. It's just been a man in a hat. Lara and her adventures are rapidly going down that route where it's just gaming by numbers. All the usual one-liners are being churned out, and so on.

**Dan:** I think the fact that they're spending so much time doing FMVs for Lucozade adverts rather than making the game itself sums it all up.

**Prezzer:** It's more telling, surely, that the two guys who invented it in the first place left after the second game. Even they didn't want to carry on with it.

**Malto:** *Tomb Raider III* is still very competently put together though. It hasn't suffered.

**Prezzer:** Oh, sure, it's very professional, it just lacks any sense of spirit.

**Mark:** It feels like a Hollywood blockbuster. It's done well, lots of special effects, and you know exactly what you're going to get, but that's it.

**Prezzer:** So what should they do for number *IV* to make it better?

**Dan:** Take it down the *Half-Life* route. Not go first-person, but

use the engine and the dynamics more. More NPCs that are interesting to talk to. More story elements.

**Malto:** Perhaps even extend it into the role-playing territory – have stats for Lara where you can build her up.

(Momentary silence)

**Dan:** Why does everyone have an inane grin on their face?

**Prezzer:** I think we were all thinking the same thing just then.

**Malto:** I said build her up, not touch her up. Have shops to visit where

you can buy things.

**Malto:** It's harsh to say *Tomb Raider III* is a bad game.

**Prezzer:** It's not a 'bad' game. It's professional, but empty of character.

**Dan:** It's devoid of all talent.

**Malto:** There is one bit of talent in there.

**Dan:** She's not real!

**Malto:** I can dress my girlfriend up as Lara Croft, then she's very, very real.

**Alt:** Shut up. [CZ]

Is *Tomb Raider III* running on empty, or is bigger truly better?

One for the nature lovers in the crowd.

**AND THE WINNER IS...**

Now that the dust has settled, which of the five games in this Supertest came out on top?

No prizes for guessing that *Thief: The Dark Project* was the most favourably received of the games under analysts. The overwhelming sense of involvement that is generated by Looking Glass's classic and original title couldn't fail to grab people. The attention to detail is second to none, and the fact that it took the first-person game down a new road, breathing new life into the genre, can only be applauded.

What was perhaps more surprising is that the bookies' favourite, *Tomb Raider III*, was greeted with such a mixed reception. The general consensus was that the series has begun to look tired, and that if new ideas aren't forthcoming in *Tomb*

*Raider IV*, Ms Croft may soon find herself reduced to hanging around on street corners to make a living.

*Realms Of The Haunting* clearly still has a place in the hearts of some, but both its age and limited subject matter are too much for some people to look beyond. *Redguard*, while certainly enjoyable, just didn't appear to generate enough widespread interest to be much of a commercial success.

Finally, and most surprisingly of all, was the muted reception *Heretic II* received. Despite a half-hearted attempt by Malto to defend it, time had clearly withered its once youthful looks to the point where only the most seriously bored would be encouraged to give it a shot.

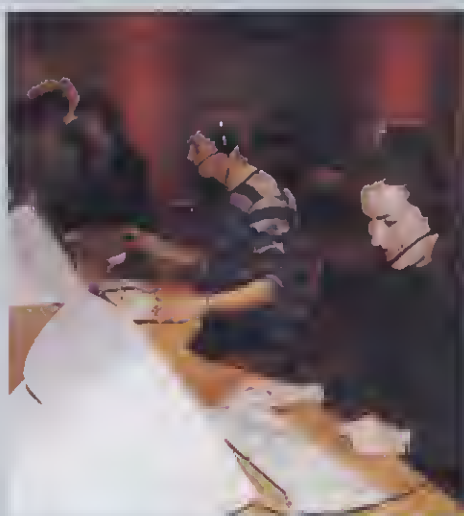
**OVERALL WINNER***Thief: The Dark Project* – stealing our hearts.

# UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

**OVER £50,000 WORTH OF PRIZES  
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**DO YOU RECKON YOU AND YOUR MATES HAVE WHAT IT TAKES** to put together a team that can beat all-comers to become the UK PC Games Champions 1999? Dennis Publishing and The Playing Fields have joined forces with AMD and Microsoft to launch the search for the cream of computer games players – and it could be your team that carries off the £10,000 cash prize, not to mention a top-flight gaming PC each... See opposite for the full low-down on the prizes on offer, or visit the Official UK Games Championships website at [www.ukpcgc.com](http://www.ukpcgc.com)

The event is designed to test the PC game-playing skills of teams of between two and four players who will compete using the latest PC technology, powered by AMD's K6®-III Processors with 3DNow!™ Technology and Microsoft's award-winning gaming hardware.



Teams will also be able to make use of Microsoft's MSN Gaming Zone UK to practice their skills online, find team partners and follow the event itself. Visit AMD at [www.3dnow.de/gaming\\_uk2/](http://www.3dnow.de/gaming_uk2/) and MSN at [zone.msn.co.uk/competition](http://zone.msn.co.uk/competition) for further details.

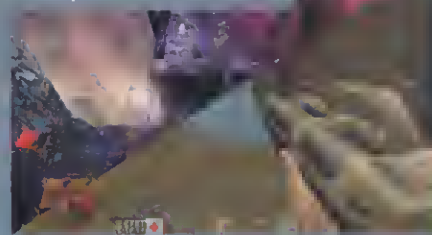
Five Regional Qualifiers (London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Cardiff and Manchester) will be held between June and August 1999 (run by The Playing Fields), each of which will each see 36 teams compete for the right to progress to the Grand Final in London on September 18. The Grand Final will be held at The Playing Fields in London's West End, where there will also be an all-comers Drop-in qualifier during July and August. See opposite for details on the Regional and Drop-in Qualifiers, or visit the official website at [www.ukpcgc.com](http://www.ukpcgc.com)

## THE GAMES

Teams will have to compete in four different gaming genres, playing eight games in all – two from each genre. The teams will designate players to play each of the eight games as they choose.

### The Gaming Categories

#### FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS Unreal, Quake II



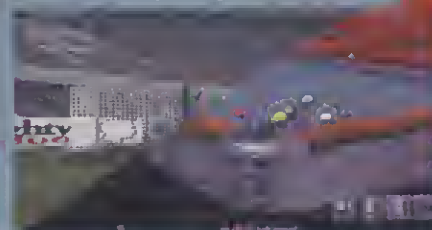
#### REAL-TIME STRATEGY Age Of Empires, Total Annihilation



#### DRIVING GAMES Motocross Madness, Need For Speed III: Hot Pursuit



#### SPORTS GAMES Actua Soccer 3, Jimmy White's 2: Cuebal





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## THE QUALIFIERS

Check the list below to find the Regional Qualifier closest to your location.

### WHAT IS THE DROP-IN QUALIFIER?

The Drop-in qualifier is intended to allow teams who are unable to enter a Regional Qualifier the opportunity to participate in the Championships. Teams can turn up at The Playing Fields to compete on the same basis as the other Qualifiers. The Drop-in qualifier runs from 5th July to 29th August and is available during The Playing Fields, opening hours (Monday to Saturday, 12 noon to 11pm). Teams wishing to compete must arrive before 6.30pm to allow enough time. The Drop-in costs £20 to enter, and unlike the other Qualifiers, we are unable to refund this entry fee.

## HOW TO ENTER

Send the coupon (or a photocopy) with a cheque for £20 (refunded on arrival at your Qualifier, except the Drop-in Qualifier, for which no refunds will be given) and you're in the running – on a first come, first served basis, with preference given to teams of four as entries are limited. Your cheque will not be cashed until your entry is accepted and a rule pack sent to you. All team members must be UK residents aged 15 or above. Employees of, or freelancers associated with, Dennis Publishing, The Playing Fields, Microsoft or AMD are ineligible for entry. Entrants accepted will be sent a full rule pack. If you wish to read these before entering, send an SAE to The Playing Fields (address below) or log on to the website ([www.ukpcgc.com](http://www.ukpcgc.com)).

## THE PRIZES

£1500 cash prize to each of the six winning Qualifier teams. Plus, the highest scorers in each of the eight individual games at each of the Qualifiers around the country will win a prize from the game's publisher worth at least £100. The highest scorers from the entire Championships in each of the eight games will each be presented with a prize from the game's publisher worth at least £2500! Third place in the final: a top-of-the-range 2D/3D graphics card. Second place: £1000 cash for the team and a top-quality monitor for each team member. The winners will walk away with the £10,000 cash prize and a top-spec PC for each member (worth around £2000 at current prices).

## The Regional Qualifiers

DATE OF QUALIFIER	LOCATION	CLOSING DATE
5 – 6 Jun 1999	London, The Playing Fields	28 May 1999
12 – 13 Jun 1999	Birmingham, Forte Posthouse	4 June 1999
3 – 4 Jul 1999	Cardiff, Welsh Institute of Sport	25 June 1999
10 – 11 Jul 1999	Glasgow, Marriott Hotel	2 July 1999
7 – 8 Aug 1999	Manchester, Renaissance Hotel	30 July 1999
5 Jul – 29 Aug 1999	Drop-in Qualifier at The Playing Fields	N/A

- Teams unable to attend any other Regional Qualifier can 'drop in' to The Playing Fields in London between the indicated dates and compete on the spot. No refunds of the £20 entry fee are applicable in this case.
- All teams entering must be able to provide at least two of its members to attend the Grand Final, which will take place at The Playing Fields in London on 18 September 1999.

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## UKPCGAMESCHAMPIONSHIPS1999

Team name	Team Captain's name and age
Other team members' names and ages	
Captain's address	Postcode
Captain's daytime phone	Captain's email address
The Regional Qualifier we will like to attend is	

- ☐ At least two team members would be able to attend the Grand Final in London on 18 September 1999. If any team members are 15, permission is required from parent/guardian. Please enclose a letter from each parent/guardian indicating permission to enter has been granted.
- ☐ I enclose a cheque/PO for £20 payable to The Playing Fields. Your cheque will not be cashed until your entry is accepted and your rule pack sent to you.

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UKPCGC

The Playing Fields

139 – 143 Whitfield Street,  
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PCZ 01

Stuck on a game? Feel like you're hooking minnows while everyone around you is pulling big, fat cod out of the water? Don't worry, here comes the **PC ZONE** speedboat to whisk you off to where shoals of giant tuna are biting like a swarm of mosquitoes

## IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

### 112 CHEATMASTER

If at first you don't succeed... cheat. Allow Keith Pullin to show you how it's done.

### 113 DEAR KEITH

We know how frustrating it is to get stuck on a game. Which is why Keith Pullin's here to provide some answers.

### 114 HOW TO...

Upgrading your PC can be a daunting prospect for gamers, but here Tim Ponting offers a cost-effective alternative to replacing it.

### 120 LANDS OF LORE III

Keith Pullin spent a week battling through *LOLIII* so that you don't have to.

### 124 DEAR WAZZA

Need a hand with a technical query that's bugging you? Our tech-head Wazza is here to help.

### 126 WATCHDOG

Not satisfied with the service you've received? Pissed off with being lobbed off? Allow *PC ZONE*'s Ann Robinson, Adam Phillips, to take up your case and put some corporate knickers in a twist.

## YOUR HOSTS



Warren Christmas



Keith Pullin



Adam Phillips



Tim Ponting

# CHEAT MASTER

Cheating all day, cheating all night. We're doing it for you, to make everything all right

★ CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

## ON THE CD



### ON THE CD

We've got over 1200 games tips and solutions squeezed on to this month's CD. Check out the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser to track them down

## NEED HELP?

If your problem's game-related, get organised and...

**WRITE TO** Dear Keith/CheatMaster, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

**EMAIL** letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Dear Keith' or 'CheatMaster' in the subject line.

## WARZONE 2100

Eidos Interactive

If you have patch 1.01 installed, press 't' to type one of the following codes, and then press Enter. You can try as many as you like.

**time toggle** Stop/start mission timer

**get off my land** Kill all enemy units

**show me the power** 1000 extra power

**whale fin** 1000 extra power

**hallo mein schatz** Skip to next mission

**work harder** Complete all currently active research topics

**double up** All your units are twice as tough

**timedemo** Show frame rate and game engine data

**kill selected** Kill presently selected units

**easy** Set easy difficulty level

**normal** Set normal difficulty level

**hard** Set hard difficulty level

**version** Tells you when the game code was compiled

You can also gain extra power by performing the following simple hex edit:

★ Go to the game's savegame directory.

★ Choose a file with the '.gam' extension, eg: game1.gam.

★ Using a hex editor, change hex values 52, 53 and 54 to FF. Save the changes.

★ You now have over 16,000,000 power! Enough for ya?

## COMMANDOS: BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

Eidos Interactive

This mission pack is still as tough as a Nazi's hobnail boots, so check out these passwords:

Level 2 KXII7M

Level 3 70H90

Level 4 YCG94

Level 5 TIWAY

Level 6 FMFSV

Level 7 8GF2S

Level 8 CH527

Alternatively, type "1982GONZO" during the game to access the following hotkey cheats:

SHIFT + X Teleport

CTRL + I Invincibility

CTRL + SHIFT + N Skip mission

## EXPENDABLE

Rage Software

We didn't think much of it as a game, but maybe these frills will help. Run the game from DOS, adding the following parameters to activate different cheat modes, eg:

C:\Expend\go.exe -mumford

-whostayedlateagain

Easter egg mode

-mumford Hodspodkins mode

-whostayedlate

Rock hard mode

Also, while playing the game, enter these commands followed by the minus (-) key on the numeric keypad:

Bod Enable cheat mode

Bing Disable cheat mode

Mrbenn Next level

Zippy God mode

Bucketofchicken

Rear view

Babapapa Extra credits

Crystaltips Extra life

Dunky Instant high score

Albertofrog Grenade power-up

## FUTURE COP LAPD

Electronic Arts

You must hold down F10 while pressing the sequence of keys below. When you've completed the code, keep holding F10 and press F5 to activate the cheat. Repeat the F10 and F5 combo as many times as you need to. To enter another code, hold F10 and press F6 to disable the current code, then hold F10 and continue with the next entry.

F2, F1, F4, F3, F3, F4, F1, F2

Turn blue player to black

F2, F1, F4, F3

Restore shield

F2, F4, F1, F3, F1, F3, F4, F2

Reload weapon 0

F4, F3, F1, F2, F4, F3, F1, F2

Reload weapon 1

F2, F1, F2, F4, F2, F1, F3

Reload weapon 2

## ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

Hasbro Interactive

Here are some more names to type in - just change the names of the guests:

Melanie Warn Increase guest's happiness

Katie Brayshaw Make guest wave

## MEGAMAN X4

Capcom

Here are a couple of sly secrets for the confused few who rate this game - and believe us, they're out there.

On the character select screen, hold the up button and press



Enter when selecting X. Now go to the Web Spider's stage and advance to where the leg armour usually is; the ultimate armour should be there instead. Collect it to gain massive armour modifications and a new crash attack that kills just about anything.

To play as Dark Zero, hold the down key while the selector is positioned on Zero.

## CARNIVORES

### Wizworks

To enable the debug mode, type "debugon" while playing. This means the dinosaurs won't attack until you do. You also get infinite ammo, and immunisation against lava.

And that's not all. Hit the following in-game keys for some extra cheating power:

**CTRL** Run faster  
**SHIFT+S** Slow motion  
**CTRL+N** Long jumps  
**SHIFT+T** Show frame rate  
**TAB** Full map

## X-FILES

### GT Interactive

Get more saved games: hold **Shift** while clicking on the save game icon in order to obtain more than your usual quota of save slots.

Bypass password: at Willmore's workstation, right-click on the letter 'O' on the word 'welcome' to bypass the password entry.

## MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98

### Microsoft

Here's something to get you shifting around the sky. Before take-off or during flight, press 'Y' and then the following keys. Once done, press 'Y' again to resume normal flight.

**F4** Increase altitude  
**F3** Decrease altitude  
**F2** Move forward  
**F1** Stop.

Note: the cursor keys can also be used to reposition your aircraft.

## ARMY MEN 2

### Ubi Soft

To enter this handy cheat mode, press 'V' during the game, then type "I when all else fails...". Next, enter one of the following codes to activate a cheat:

**I l give up** Restart level  
**I venl vidl vincl** Skip level  
**I no rocket launcher** Infinite rocket launcher  
**I village people** Infinite flame-thrower  
**I l have a rock** Infinite hand grenades  
**I rubby ray** Infinite magnifying glass  
**I nght of the walking dead** Enemies become zombies  
**I phoenixl** Flame soldier  
**I patton's speech** Give your troops a rousing speech  
**I metal sheeting** Grey uniform  
**I shrink wrap** Tan uniform  
**I suicide kings** Kill sergeant  
**I fourth of July** M80

**I beautiful nkita** Infinite sniper rifle  
**I surprise party** Loads of enemies materialise  
**I spidey senses tingling** Show all enemies  
**I santinl** Invincible  
**I jumpjets** Teleport sergeant somewhere close by  
**I infa arts** Sergeant has more stealth and speed  
**I roach spray** Infinite can of fire  
**I armageddon** Annihilation  
**I doctor doctor** Full health  
**I aluminum foil** Flak jacket  
**I god of gamblers** Random item  
**I poopier scooper** Minesweeper  
**I gnomish inventions** Explosives  
**I acme discs** Land mines  
**I paper dolls** Paratroopers  
**I watchtower in the sky** Satellite view  
**I geronimo!** 12 air strikes

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Richard Crook here will answer any question you have. Possibly.

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**Tipszone@hotmail.com**

# DEAR KEITH

Considerately getting you out of all your gaming quandaries: **Keith Pullin**

## SILVER LINING

**Q** I'm stuck on probably the biggest game ever made. I am of course referring to the excellent adventure *Silver*. I've come across the Aqua Dragon in Act 4, but I can't kill him. I simply need to know how this can be done. Can you help me?

**Alan Edwards, Harrow**

**A** Yes. Did you notice that Jag dropped an orb before the dragon killed him? Well, you need to pick that up and then, with a fair degree of accuracy, attack the belly of the beast before you - that's his only weak spot. When you've torn his underside to shreds, the dragon dies and you move on to Act 5. And you thought Act 4 was tough?

## BROTHER BEYOND

**Q** My brother and I are slogging our way through *Commandos: Beyond The Call Of Duty*, but we've come to a halt on mission five. We've freed the spy, but the trouble is that whenever we use him to try to distract the guards, they see through his disguise and raise the alarm. What can we do?

**The Explosion Brothers, Weybridge**

**A** The first thing you need to do is get an officer's uniform for your spy. Go on to the roof of the house (using your usual cunning skills to avoid detection) and take the uniform from the washing line. Deck your man out in these swanky threads and he'll dupe both grunts and officers alike.

## R U TOCA 2 ME?

**Q** In *TOCA 2*, I always seem to lose the race no matter what circuit or car I choose. I would absolutely love it if you could just tell me what the best car is so I can practise with it and hopefully get a bit better.

**Justin Carter, Peterborough**

**A** Easy. For all-round driving ease, the Audi A4 is the pick of the bunch. For something a bit quicker but still with good handling, try the Renault Laguna.

## EVIL GIRLIES

**Q** I'm playing as Leon (I don't like playing as Claire, she's just a Lara clone) in *Resident Evil 2*, and I'd like to know how to kill the huge, putrid zombie/monster thing at the end of scenario two. I don't have much ammunition left, and this ugly git is taking me to the cleaners every time. What do I have to do?

**Claire Warner, Liverpool**

**A** Hmm, you should really have one rocket left at this point. If you don't then you might have to go back to a previous save point and try again, because that, my friend, is what you need to kill this creature. You do need to pump it full of lead from your Custom Magnum too, but I guess you already knew that bit.

## LORE BREAKER

**Q** I know you've already printed a guide for *Lands Of Lore III*, but please bear with me for a moment.

I've tried to defeat the weird jellyfish thing at the end of the bizarre floating ghost level, but the bugger overwhelms me by chucking out little jellyfish. I've just about had enough of this now, so please, please, please tell me what to do.

**Sam Mortimer, Tyne & Wear**

**A** Just this once, then. I reckon your problem is that you haven't got a strong enough hand weapon. If you're a mage (and I suspect you are), try casting loads of shield spells before doing anything, and then, because of your limited weapon power, try some close-range life-sapping spells. It may take longer than usual, but keep topping up on shield spells as you fight and you should get there eventually.

## IT'S A MONSTER!

**Q** I know you're going to think I'm a bit mad, but someone told me that there's a monster hidden somewhere in the cockpit in *Flight Unlimited*. Is this true? Is it in the little black box?

**Les Rutherford, Fratton**

**A** Curiously, you're absolutely correct, although it's not literally hiding behind you or anything. What you have to do is start a flying lesson, then press Esc, M, and G all at the same time. Now take a look at your instructor!

## TOTALLY STUCK

**Q** I have the first *Total Annihilation* game and one of the problems I

have is that I can't detect enemy units quickly enough. There I am, building up my resources, when suddenly troops pour on to the screen and slaughter me. Just where am I going wrong? Any tip would be warmly welcomed.

**Aaron Woolstack, Belfast**

**A** You haven't managed to suss out radar yet, have you? The best thing to do is equip as many roving vehicles as possible with radar, so that when they're exploring they uncover more enemy positions. This definitely gives you a better idea of where the enemy is coming from. Happy hunting.

## NO FORCE HERE

**Q** I'm playing *Delta Force*. I've made my way through to campaign five, mission five, and have become bogged down by heavy fire. My other team members have all been killed and, having been left alone, I'm kind of wondering where to go from here. It seems that every direction I try concludes in the same gory manner. Got any suggestions?

**Rory Fletcher, Slidmouth**

**A** Your team members always die at the start of this stage, so sadly you're forced to go it alone. The best plan of action is to take out the smallish base to the east first of all, then switch to the main base. Obviously you need to pick off soldiers with the sniper rifle before you go wading into close combat, but that's about it, I'm afraid. War is tough, after all.

# HOW TO...

# UPGRADE YOUR PC

Upgrading your PC has never been a more attractive option, particularly for gamers. The number of new types and speeds of processors released in the last 12 months has been terrifying, but now is a cost-effective time to upgrade – rather than replace – your PC

TECHED-UP Tim Ponting

**T**his feature is not intended to teach you everything you need to know about how to build a performance PC by upgrading – it's to get you thinking along the right lines, and give

you clues as to whether, for instance, you need a new motherboard or can keep your old one. It doesn't delve into details of motherboard chipsets, nor does it enter the arcane world of over-clocking processors or cover the use of unusual combinations of components. For that kind of information, you'll need to have

## WHO SHOULD UPGRADE?

Basically, the first questions you need to answer are related to the machine as a whole. If you have a Pentium or AMO K6, the chances are that buying a completely new machine will be the most cost-effective option. Why? First off, the motherboard is probably of

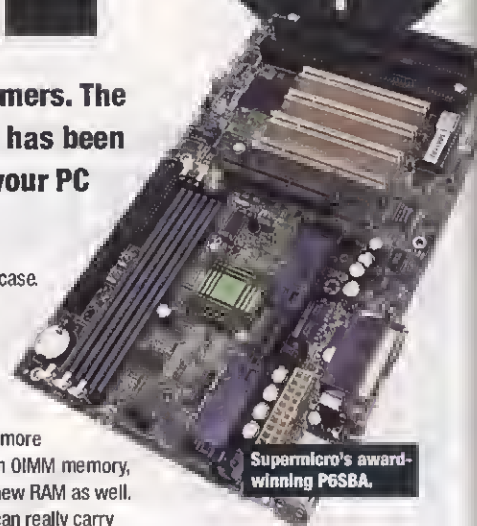
ATX-format PC case. And Pentium motherboards typically use 72-pin SIMM-style memory, rather than the more modern 168-pin DIMM memory, so you'll need new RAM as well. In fact, all you can really carry over are your graphics cards (which will be old and slow), your hard drive (which will be too small) and your monitor (which will probably be old and fuzzy).

We've mentioned rather a lot of jargon already, but don't let that put you off, as you don't need to understand what SIMM, DIMM, AT and ATX actually mean – you just need to know that AT/SIMM means 'get a new machine', and ATX/DIMM probably doesn't.

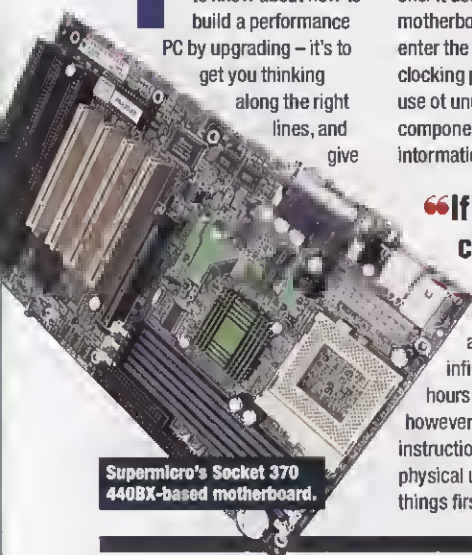
**"If you have a Pentium or AMD K6, the chances are that buying a completely new machine will be the best option"**

an Internet account and infinite patience for long hours of research. It does, however, provide step-by-step instructions to smooth the physical upgrade itself. But first things first...

the AT type, with an AT-format case. To replace the motherboard and processor with Pentium II/III and Celeron or AMD K6-2/III combos necessitates a move to an ATX-style motherboard – which in turn necessitates a new



Supramicro's award-winning P6SBA.



Supramicro's Socket 370 440BX-based motherboard.

## UPGRADING: SCARY STUFF

If you own a Pentium, don't bother reading on – go and spend as much as you can afford, preferably on an AMO K6-III 450MHz-based or Pentium III 500MHz-based machine. Bye!

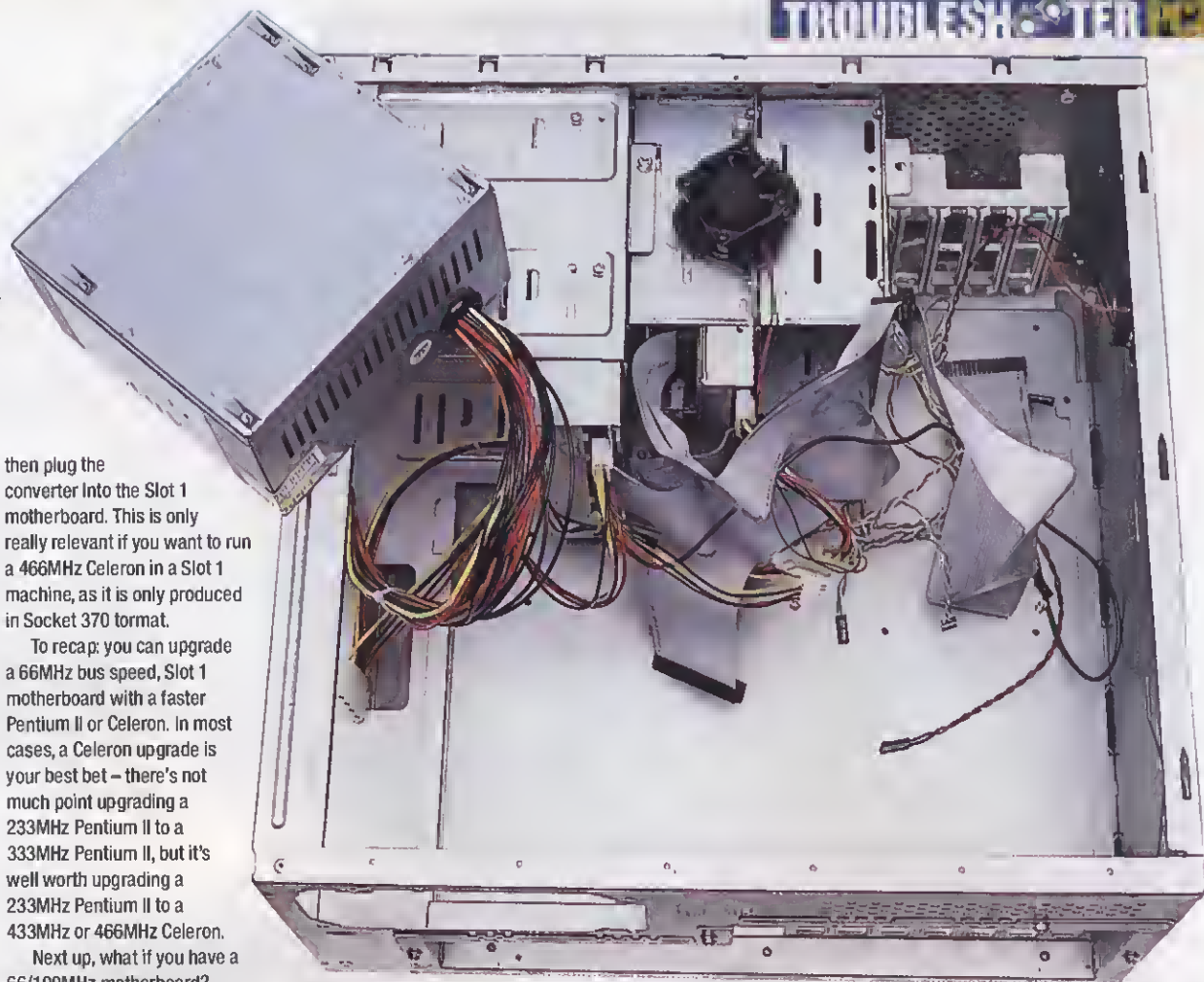
For everyone else, there are inevitably a few things to wrap your grey matter around, which is why we've provided a flowchart

## PROCESSORS – THE FULL SPECS

Manufacturer	Processor	Acceleration technologies	Speeds (MHz)	System bus speed (MHz)	L1 Cache	Internal L2 Cache
Intel	Pentium III	MMX, SSE	450, 500, 550	100	32K	512K
Intel	Pentium II	MMX	350, 400, 450 (later versions)	100	32K	512K
Intel	Pentium II	MMX	350, 400, 450	100	32K	512K
Intel	Pentium II	MMX	233, 266, 300, 333	66	32K	512K
Intel	Celeron	MMX	266, 300	66	32K	None
Intel	Celeron	MMX	300A, 333, 366, 400, 433	66	32K	128K
Intel	Celeron	MMX	300A, 333, 366, 400, 433, 466	66	32K	128K
AMO	K6-III	MMX, 3Now!	400, 450	100	64K	256K
AMO	K6-2	MMX, 3Now!	300, 333, 350, 366, 380, 400, 450, 475	Various	64K	—>



➡ This is your old machine ready and waiting for you to make a motherboard insertion, fnar.



walk-through to help the decision process. Let's start with slots. A CPU has to be plugged into the motherboard: this connector is called a 'slot'. There are three main types in this class of computer: Slot 1, used by earlier Celerons and all Pentium IIs and IIIs; Socket 370, used by more recent Celerons; and Socket 7, used by later Pentiums and the AMD K6 chip family. All these details are covered in the 'Processors - the full specs' table below.

The first question is: what slot type is your motherboard? If you have a Pentium II, it will be Slot 1. You can potentially upgrade your machine with a Pentium III, faster Pentium II or Celeron without having to buy a new motherboard. So how do you determine this?

The first important thing is to find out the 'bus speed' of your existing motherboard. If you have your manual to hand, it should tell you it can support either 60/66MHz or 66/100MHz operation. If it supports the former, you can upgrade to a Pentium II 333MHz or slower, or a Celeron 433MHz or slower.

It gets more confusing... Celerons come in two flavours: those with a Slot 1 connector, and those with a Socket 370 connector. You can only plug a Slot 1 Celeron into a Slot 1 motherboard. Some manufacturers, such as Supermicro, produce a Slot 1-to-Socket 370 converter - in other words, you plug a Socket 370 Celeron into the converter, and

then plug the converter into the Slot 1 motherboard. This is only really relevant if you want to run a 466MHz Celeron in a Slot 1 machine, as it is only produced in Socket 370 format.

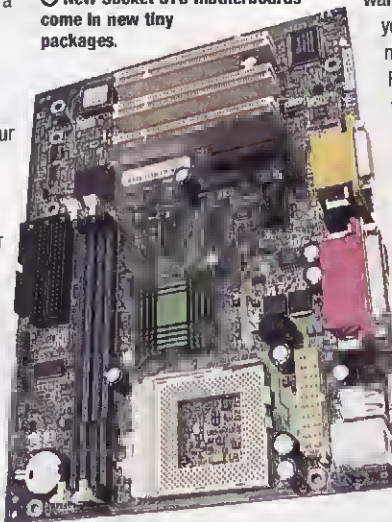
To recap: you can upgrade a 66MHz bus speed, Slot 1 motherboard with a faster Pentium II or Celeron. In most cases, a Celeron upgrade is your best bet - there's not much point upgrading a 233MHz Pentium II to a 333MHz Pentium II, but it's well worth upgrading a 233MHz Pentium II to a 433MHz or 466MHz Celeron.

Next up, what if you have a 66/100MHz motherboard? Pentium IIs of 350MHz and faster, and all Pentium IIIs, require a 100MHz bus speed. If you have a 100MHz-compatible motherboard, you can plug in anything up to a fast Pentium III. But a word of warning: if you're currently running the motherboard at 66MHz with, say, a 333MHz Pentium II, the chances are your OIMM memory is rated at 66MHz. You'll have to replace your RAM with faster 100MHz OIMMs, so factor that into your cost. Of course, you can still upgrade to a Celeron, just running the motherboard at 66MHz, and keep your memory. You may feel this is the best option depending on how flush you are for cash.

If you don't have a 100MHz motherboard, but

“The new K6-III chips are blinding, and a K6-III 450MHz will produce a better frame rate in *Quake II* than a 500MHz Pentium III chip”

➡ New Socket 370 motherboards come in new tiny packages.



want a fast Pentium II or III, then you'll have to buy a new motherboard, processor and RAM. It could still be worthwhile. Check out the costs of these components in *Computer Shopper* magazine to determine whether you should buy a new machine or upgrade your old one. Not many people will fall into this category, but you may have a slow Slot 1 or Socket 370 Celeron. In either of these cases, you can upgrade to a faster Celeron without replacing memory or your motherboard.

So how does AMD fit into all of

this? Well, the new K6-III chips are blinding, especially for gamers, and the K6-III 450MHz will produce a better frame rate in *Quake II* than a 500MHz Pentium III, all other components being equal. The only problem is that if you have a Pentium II, you'll definitely have to change the motherboard to plug in a K6-III as it uses a totally different socket type known as Socket 7. And again, it gets confusing as a result of bus speeds. Theoretically, you can plug an AMD K6-2 or III into a plain Socket 7 motherboard with a bus speed up to 66MHz, but it's not really worth considering, as you'll only get the performance benefit with an enhanced Socket



L3 Cache	Transfer Ratio Core to L2 cache	Official Name	Acronym	Slot type(s)	Connector designation
None	50%	Single Edge Contact Cartridge 2	SECC2	Slot 1	SC242
None	50%	Single Edge Contact Cartridge 2	SECC2	Slot 1	SC242
None	50%	Single Edge Contact Cartridge	SECC	Slot 1	SC242
None	50%	Single Edge Contact Cartridge	SECC	Slot 1	SC242
None	N/A	Single Edge Processor Package	SEPP	Slot 1	SC242
None	100%	Single Edge Processor Package	SEPP	Slot 1	SC242
None	100%	Plastic Pin Grid Array	PPGA	Slot 370	Socket 370
Optional 512K - 2048K	100%	Ceramic Pin Grid Array	CPGA	Super7	Socket 7
Optional 512K - 2048K	100%	Ceramic Pin Grid Array	CPGA	Super7	Socket 7

7 motherboard known as 'Super7' or 'Super Socket 7'. This supports all the features of K6-III, including the tri-level cache (don't worry about what that is, it just makes it faster!), has an AGP slot for super-

fast AGP graphics cards, runs at up to 100MHz bus speed and so on. Bear in mind again that you'll also need 100MHz RAM to make use of a K6-III on a Super7 motherboard. If you already have

a K6-2 in a Super7 motherboard, you should be able to upgrade to a K6-III, providing your memory is fast enough.

Another quick recap: to upgrade from a slow Pentium II to

a fast AMD K6-III, you'll need a new motherboard, CPU and memory. Again, it's probably a more cost-effective option than buying a new PC.

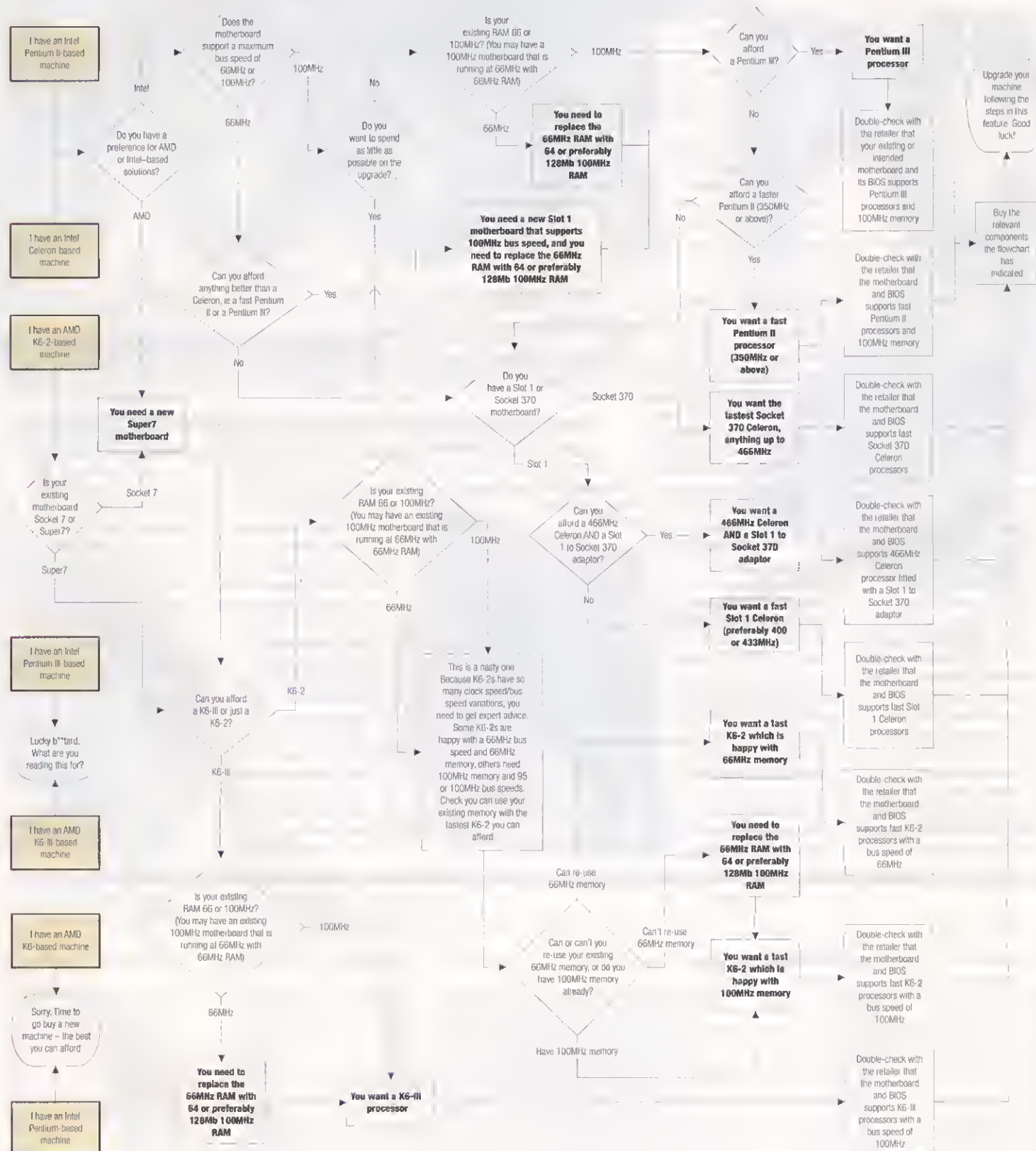
So what kind of performance

benefits can you expect, and why? All Pentium IIs/IIIs and K6-2/IIIs support MMX, which is the technology that speeds up multimedia. AMD chips use a technology called Single



## IT'S MAKE-YOUR-MIND-UP TIME...

To bring order out of the chaos, follow the flowchart from left to right and discover exactly what your upgrade options are





# WALKTHROUGH

Upgrading your machine is a potentially costly business if you manage to destroy it in the process. If you're not confident, walk away now or get a techie mate to help. Make sure you don't fry any electrostatically sensitive components – ground yourself before picking anything up. Your best bet is to buy an antistatic wristband that can be permanently earthed, available from your local retailer

Research your options thoroughly. Try using the flowchart as a quick guide. Most importantly, if you have access to the Internet, use it to download the latest manual to the motherboard you intend to buy or already have. The best way to shop for upgrade material is to know more about the components than the salesman does.

## THE BIGGIE: UPGRADING BOTH MOTHERBOARD AND PROCESSOR

In this example, we chose to upgrade an old 233MHz Pentium II with a 66MHz motherboard to a brand spanking new 450MHz AMD K6-II resplendent in a new 100MHz Gigabyte GA-5AX Super7 motherboard (shown in the walkthrough). We also performed the same process upgrading an old 66MHz 440LX 266MHz Pentium II to a new 100MHz 440BX-based system (using Supermicro's excellent P6SBA motherboard) with a Pentium III supplying the power.

**1** First of all, you need to set the groundwork. After upgrading, you'll need to reformat your boot drive and reinstall Windows. Assuming you use Windows 98, make sure you have the boot disk that you created during the Win98 install: that way you can access the CD after upgrading. If not, make one now by going to Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs then 'Start-up disk'.

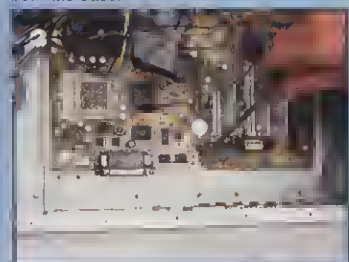
Make sure all your data files (saved games, documents etc) are stored on a drive other than your C: drive. If you only have a C: drive, you either need to back up all your data files, resign yourself to losing them all, or buy some partition management software such as the superb Partition Magic. What the last option allows you to do is make your C: drive smaller, create a D: drive alongside it, then copy data files from C: to D:. Then, when you reformat C: later in the process, you don't lose your precious stuff. Also, check you have driver disks for all your cards (graphics, sound, 3D etc). If not, download/beg/borrow/steal them. You can pop the files on the D: drive for ease of access. If they're zipped, unzip them now.



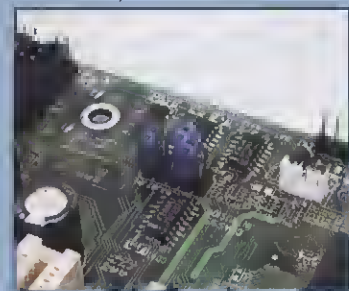
**2** Check all stickers and markings on the motherboard (shown in the picture) – these often show the current BIOS number when sold, the motherboard revision number, etc etc. Use your machine while it's working to download the latest BIOS data file and both motherboard and BIOS manuals for the new motherboard from the relevant

website. If you don't have access to the Internet, make sure your retailer supplies you with them.

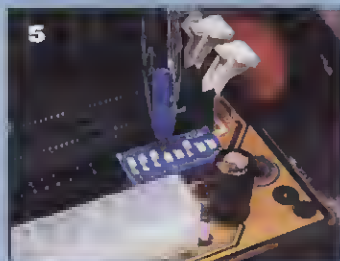
**3** Remove the old motherboard – it's the same process as reinstalling the new one (shown below) in reverse: remove the cards from the system, power supply unit and drive cages if they obscure the motherboard, unplug the cables attached to the motherboard, and unscrew or unclip it from the case.



**4** OK, so you have a case with most of the clutter removed. First off, you need to work out what motherboard mounting post points match the holes on your motherboard. Place the board in the machine and compare the mounts with the holes. Remove the board then screw the brass mountings in the relevant case holes. (Note: Some cases have nasty springy plastic mounts which require careful plier-work when removing from the motherboard.)

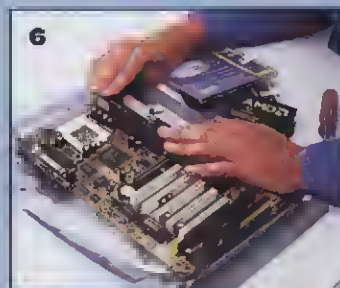


**5** Check the motherboard manual and carefully work out the correct settings for the jumpers and switches on the motherboard for your CPU type and memory (jumpers are little clips that sit over pairs of pins, as shown above). Two-pin jumpers (see picture) have to be set to open or closed (open is where there is no clip or it sits on one pin, closed is where the clip electrically shorts the pins by joining them). However, many jumpers are three-pin, and you have to set the clip so it shorts either pins 1 and 2, or pins 2 and 3, or neither. Pin 1 is indicated by a figure 1 printed on the motherboard next to it (or sometimes by a white square around it), while pins 2 and 3 are either blank or have a rectangle around them.

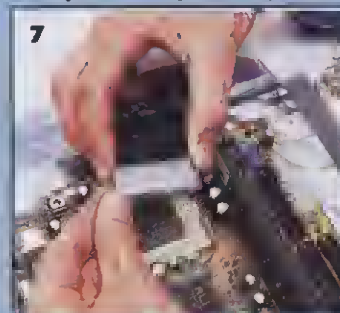


**6** Some motherboards use switches, or a combination of switches and jumpers. Use a biro to change switch settings (on or off).

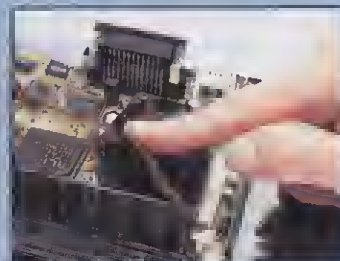
Some irritating motherboard manuals don't match processors with switch/jumper settings, but instead match 'multiplier' settings with switches/jumpers. In this case, you need to divide the processor speed by the bus speed to give the correct multiplier figure. For example, this 500MHz Pentium III is in a motherboard set at 100MHz, hence the multiplier is 5.0. A 350MHz Pentium II in a 100MHz motherboard would have a multiplier of 3.5, a 333MHz Pentium II in a 66MHz motherboard would have a multiplier of 5.0, and so on.



**7** Next you need to fit the memory and processor. You can fit all the bits to the motherboard after screwing it in, but it's usually easier to mount the memory and processor first, provided the board will slide in properly after they're fitted. First the memory – DIMMs only fit one way round...



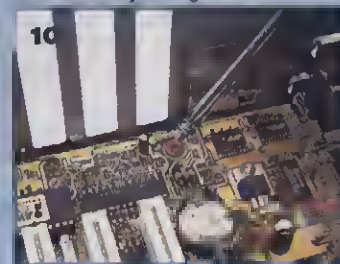
**8** ...and now the processor. In this case, you need to attach the processor fan to the K6-II first. Be very, very careful – the slightest bit of static can wipe the smile off your face when you switch on.



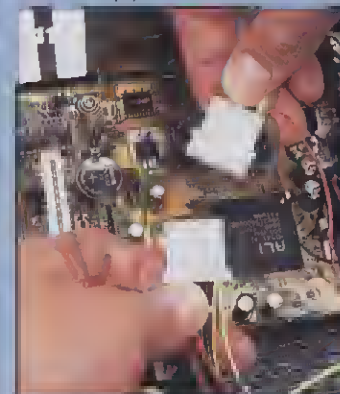
**9** Lift the lever, lower the processor into the Socket 7 slot, carefully matching the pins (it only fits one way), then drop the lever to secure it.



**10** Slide the motherboard into the case, making sure the connectors for serial, parallel, mouse, keyboard and USB all marry into the right place in the plate attached to the ATX case. You may need to lift clips over the sockets using a screwdriver or your fingernail.



**11** Screw the motherboard down, making sure you use the card washers that should have come off the old board (unless it's fixed with clips).



**12** Connect power to the processor fan



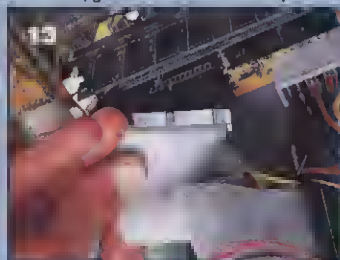


## WALKTHROUGH

**now.** If you forget, the CPU will overheat shortly after boot-up and you'll fry it. In this case, it plugs into a standard power cable from the power supply unit; Slot 1 processors have fans that take their power from a short cable attached to the motherboard — make sure it's connected.



**13** Connect the various mini-cables to the appropriate places on the motherboard. Consult the manual as to which is connected where — generally you're OK if you connect them the wrong way round but on the right pins (they may not perform the right function, but they won't break anything) but you can cause damage if you connect them across the wrong pins. After boot-up, you'll soon be able to identify whether the power LED, for example, needs to be reversed, as it won't come on when the power is on if it's the wrong way round. If in doubt, get a techie friend to help.

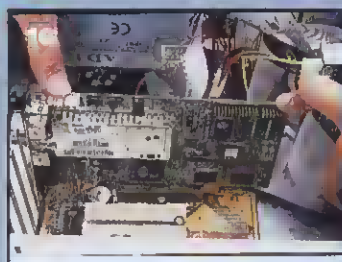


**14** Connect all the remaining cables to the motherboard: the ATX power connector (it only fits one way), the floppy drive, IDE cable(s) or SCSI cable. The red line on the edge of the cables should marry with pin 1 on the slot — it's indicated on the motherboard, or the alignment is shown in the motherboard manual.



**15** Screw the power supply unit back into the case (you only need to remove it if it gets in the way of the motherboard — you may also have to remove drive cages etc if they protrude over the motherboard).

**16** Double-check everything from steps 5 to 14. Once the power is on, there's no turning back.



**17** Plug in the primary graphics card, either PCI or AGP. Unless you need a SCSI card for your hard drive and/or CD-ROM to work, don't install any other cards yet. Connect the SCSI card to the drive(s) if relevant.

**18** Put your Win98 floppy in the floppy drive and check the machine boots. If it doesn't, most motherboard manuals have a troubleshooting section to help out. Once it's booting OK, consult the BIOS manual and check the settings are correct. Do an auto-detect if you've an IDE hard drive and/or CD-ROM. If the machine works all right, you can leave it there; you may, however, want to upgrade the BIOS to its latest version. Follow the instructions and do so if you wish.

**19** Re-boot with the floppy and reinstall Windows 98 from the CD-ROM. Update the video card drivers, then reinstall your other cards one by one, installing and updating drivers as necessary. Load your commonly used software, DirectX and so on. At this point, if you have the drive space, create a copy of this clean boot partition using Partition Magic — that way if the machine ever screws up, you can go back to a working set-up by deleting the primary partition and reinstalling the clean one.

**20** Sit back and sigh contentedly.

### THE NOT-QUITE-SO-BIGGIE: UPGRADING THE PROCESSOR BUT KEEPING THE EXISTING MOTHERBOARD

We performed two processes here: upgrading a 100MHz Slot 1 motherboard from a 300MHz Pentium II to a 500MHz Pentium III, and upgrading a 66MHz Slot 1 motherboard to a 466MHz Celeron using a Slot 1 to Socket 370 adapter from Supermicro.

As most of the steps are similar to the first walkthrough, we've just indicated what you have to do differently.

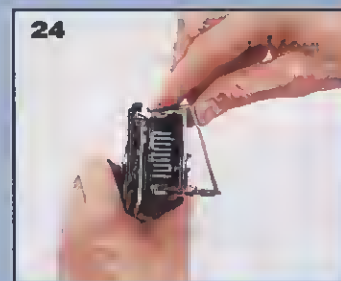
**21** Even though you are only upgrading the processor, you have to be just as careful in terms of preparation. Firstly, and most importantly, you are almost certainly going to have to upgrade the BIOS of the motherboard. In fact, do it even if you don't think you have to. Make a note of the markings on the motherboard as in step 2 above, go to its manufacturer's website, and download the latest BIOS and manual for that particular board. Upgrade the BIOS

**now**, while the old processor is still in there and the machine is working. If you don't, and install the new processor, it may not be recognised and you'll have to start again with the old processor.

**22** Theoretically, Windows 98 should be happy if you're only upgrading the CPU: you don't have to reinstall, but we recommend you do to be on the safe side. Perform the actions in step 1 above.

**23** Depending on the layout of your machine, you may not actually have to remove the motherboard to upgrade it — especially if the case is a large one. Here we assume you have to. Perform the actions in step 3 above.

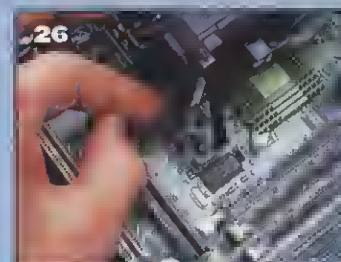
**24** Consult the motherboard manual and set the jumpers and/or switches at the correct settings for the new processor as in steps 5 and 6 above.



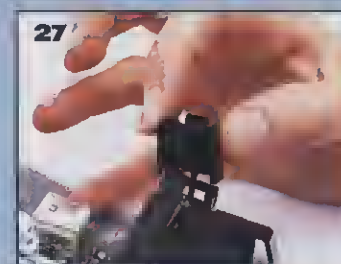
**25** Motherboards have varying retention mechanisms for Slot 1 processors. They are supplied with the board rather than your new processor, so make sure you keep them when you remove the old processor, which is the reverse of these steps (28 to 25). This motherboard has a particularly solid mechanism with struts that support the weight of the processor cartridge as well as the main mounting. This picture shows the struts being slipped onto the side of the processor cartridge.



**26** The processor slips carefully into the holding mechanism. It only fits one way round. (I forgot to put the struts on before taking this photo!) Make sure it is firmly in the slot.



**27** The struts sit over pins in the motherboard, and a sliding plastic grip anchors the strut to the pin.

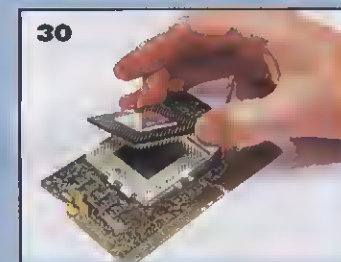


**28** Finally, you have to slide the top retention clips over the cartridge and holding mechanism.

**29** Complete installation of the motherboard, if you've removed it, as in steps 10 to 20 above.

**Installing the Celeron Instead of a Pentium III is more or less the same process. Complete stages 21 to 24 above. Then:**

**30** Lift the retention lever on the Slot 1 to Socket 370 adapter and place the Celeron processor into the socket (it fits only one way), and lower the retention lever on the side to fix it firmly in place.



**31** Secure the tan unit to the socket using the spring clip.



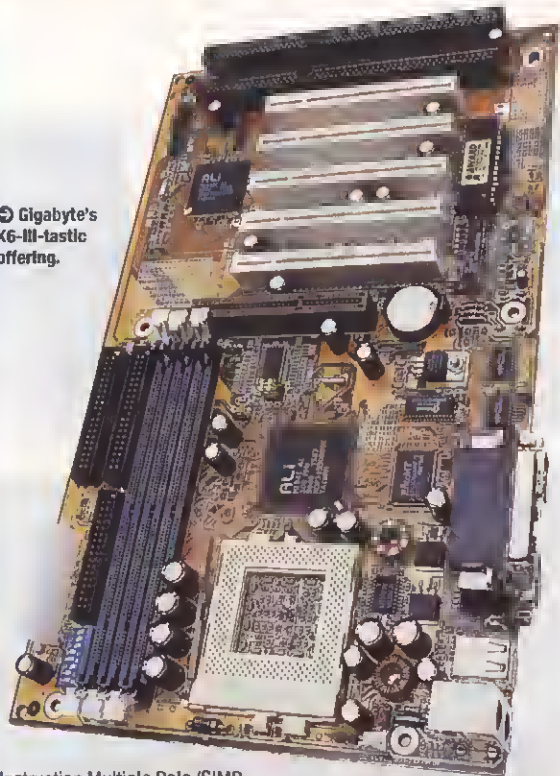
**32** Lower the assembly into the holding mechanism and fit the top retention clips as shown. The struts are not used here.



**33** Complete installation as in steps 10 to 20 above.



Gigabyte's K6-III-lastic offering.



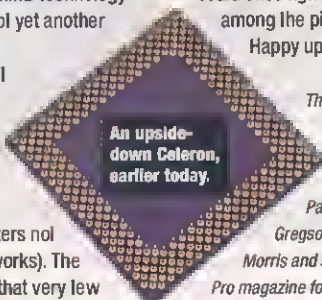
Instruction Multiple Data (SIMD – again, you don't need to worry how it works) to produce another multimedia enhancement called 3DNow!. Plenty of games support 3DNow! directly as does, more importantly, Microsoft's DirectX 6+ games interface. In other words, AMD has the lead over

Valve, the developers of *Half-Life*, have SSE support in the pipeline, but as yet it is not supported in any version of DirectX. It will certainly make it into a future version of DirectX, but until then, for 3D gaming, AMD's K6-III rules the roost. And it's good value for

**“AMD has the lead over Intel in 3D graphics as Pentium IIs and Celerons only have MMX technology up their sleeves”**

Intel in 3D graphics as Pentium IIs and Celerons only have MMX up their sleeves. However, Pentium IIs also use SIMD technology as the basis of yet another multimedia enhancement technology called SSE (Streaming SIMD Extensions – again, it matters not a jot how it works). The downside is that very few games make use of SSE;

money too, though rumours of unbelievably aggressive pricing soon to be announced by Intel could once again put the cat among the pigeons. Happy upgrading. **PCW**



Thanks to Dev at Boston (Supermicro's UK distributor), Graham Palmer of Intel, Sue Gregson of AMD and James Morris and James Gorboid of PC Pro magazine for their assistance in the construction of this feature.

## MOTHERBOARDS: RESEARCHING ONLINE

The world of motherboards is a bewildering one. Basically, the motherboard acts as a backbone for your PC – the processor plugs into it, and the BIOS and motherboard chipset handle communication between all the respective components. The motherboard chipset tends to be the determining factor in the choice of which motherboard works well with which processor. To get on with this stuff, look out for the regular motherboard and chipset reviews in *PC Pro* magazine – its bods are the experts.

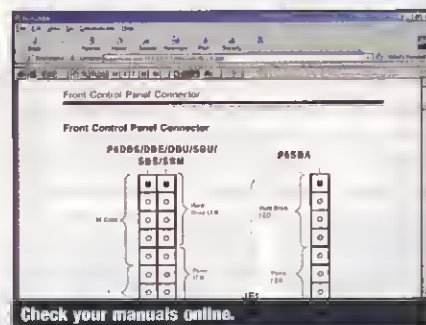
As a rule, your safest bet at the moment for Intel-based processors is a motherboard based on the Intel 440BX chipset. Supermicro produces several boards that use this chipset, including the Slot 1 Super P6SBA (which got a stonkingly good review in *PC Pro* recently) and the Socket 370 Super 370SBA. We've tested both in the course of this feature and they proved simple to set up – and last once operational. The Supermicro website is also a mine of useful information and its manuals are excellent.

On the Super7 side, there are a number of chipsets from ALI, SIS and VIA. The Gigabyte GA-5AX board we tested was supplied by AMD itself and featured the Aladdin V chipset from ALI: it worked well. Sadly, we know from many sources that Super7 chipsets and motherboards are extremely fussy about AMO processors – it shouldn't put you off buying AMO, but do your research very thoroughly to make sure the motherboard will work with your spankadelic K6-III.

Online resources:

<a href="http://www.anandtech.com">www.anandtech.com</a>	Great links, and lots of motherboard reviews
<a href="http://www.sysopt.com/links.html">www.sysopt.com/links.html</a>	Another excellent links page
<a href="http://www.amd.com">www.amd.com</a>	AMD's site – has good motherboard stuff
<a href="http://www.intel.com">www.intel.com</a>	Intel's site – be prepared to have to go to the developer section to find out even quite basic stuff
<a href="http://cpusite.examedia.nl">http://cpusite.examedia.nl</a>	Good up-to-date news on CPU developments
<a href="http://www.pcpro.co.uk">www.pcpro.co.uk</a>	The best website for computer users.

Has the full motherboard review from issue 52 in the Labs section – well worth a read



## OTHER QUICK PERFORMANCE HIKES

A fast motherboard and CPU can easily be let down by the components connected to them. In the course of this feature, we upgraded one machine with a 10.2Gb Maxtor Diamond Max Plus 5120 hard drive, which made a huge difference to loading times. The drive spins at 7,200 rpm, which is much faster than certain cheaper drives. The other good thing about Maxtor hard drives is that they come with everything you need: drive cables, 5.25in to 3.5in drive bay converters, mounting screws and so on. A great buy at under £200.

Of course, RAM is the other simple upgrade – you should really be aiming to have a total of at least 128Mb. Shop around for good deals on 100MHz memory – we found [www.insight.com/uk](http://www.insight.com/uk) to be one of the cheapest in the UK.



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# LANDS OF

## WALKTHROUGH

Travelling through time and space, *Keith Pullin* seeks the ultimate answer. In other words, he spent a week sweating it out on *Lands Of Lore III* so that you don't have to

★ REVIEWED PCZ #74 SCORE 90%

### DECISIONS, DECISIONS

So which guilds offer what, and which are you going to join?

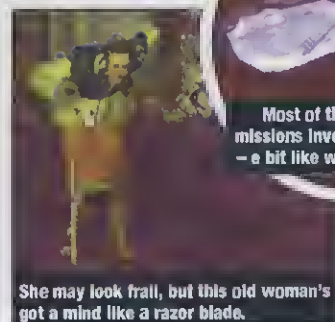
After the gentle introduction, you end up outside Gladstone Keep wondering which guild to join. The cleric guild is to the west, the mage guild is to the east, and the fighter guild is just north of the mage guild. To be honest, each class has useful advantages and there's nothing stopping you joining all of them. So go ahead – do just that. However, if you're going to choose a familiar, go for Syrus (Thief) – he tends to offer better advice than the rest and can also open locked chests and find hidden doors.

Here's a bit more information on each guild:

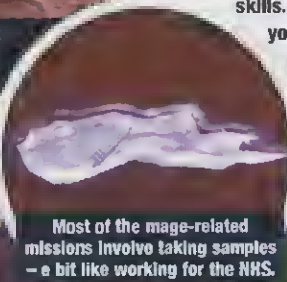
GUILD	HOW TO JOIN	GENERAL ADVANTAGES
Fighter	Kill all the rats in the old docks	Enables powerful close combat
Mage	Take a sample of portal energy	Learn powerful long-range spells
Cleric	Get a pork chop for Boris	Gives you plenty of healing options
Thief	Simply find their hideout	Enables deadly back-stab/killing blow



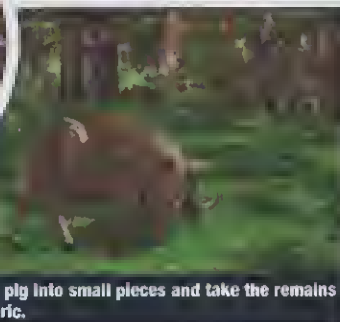
One of Gladstone's finest warriors. No wonder the town's in such a mess.



She may look frail, but this old woman's got a mind like a razor blade.



Most of the mage-related missions involve taking samples – a bit like working for the NHS.



Chop this tasty pig into small pieces and take the remains to Boris the cleric.

Remember to visit the guilds whenever you find any interesting items that might be worth selling. Think about it logically though; if you find a two-handed sword, it's highly unlikely that the mage guild will be interested; but take it to the fighters guild and it's a very different story.

Generally speaking it's a good idea to return to the guilds after each world. Not only can you heal yourself, but you can also find out about any submissions you need to undertake, and learn new skills. You can also stock up on any items you need for the next world. Visit your guilds often; use them well, for they are the key to your survival.

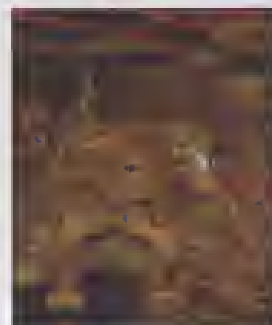


For an immortal, he's pretty stupid. And ugly.

This guide gives you that all-important *LOL!!!* walkthrough as well as general tips on how to prepare yourself for the gruelling adventure ahead. Furthermore, there's advice on how to cope with other well-trodden areas of the game such as the town and forest. Let the quest begin...

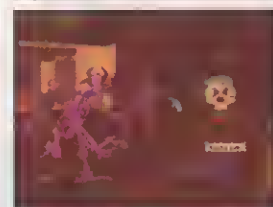
### DRARACLE'S LAIR

Once you've joined a guild, you should continue by seeking the Draracle. Go into Gladstone Forest and head south until you reach a small volcano. The portal here takes you to Volcania, where the Draracle is currently residing. Chat with him and go through the portal he leaves behind. This takes you directly to the Draracle's Lair where the Sigil is hidden. The Sigil is the device you need to use to collect the five pieces of mirror in order to get your soul back. Got that? Good.



For some easy experience points, try decimating the local orc population.

After Jakel has messed you about with his pathetic puppet, the real Draracle's voice guides you onwards. Throw some dust over the invisible pathway and keep going. You should find the Sigil fairly easily.



⚡ If you're in a hurry, run straight past these bony pests. If you want some easy money and experience, stop and fight.

Now it's time to start collecting those pieces of the mirror. Two portals are visible on the map. Choose either one – it doesn't matter which order you complete them in, although the Frozen Wastes is probably the easier world of the two.

The Draracle's Lair is a place you find yourself returning to time and time again. Skeletal warriors patrol the hallways and, while a hindrance at first, they eventually turn out to be a good supply of money – for some reason they always carry loose change around with them. These skeletons are often accompanied by orcs who also have a base within the Lair. Being slow and stupid, they're easy prey, though sadly they have very little of any worth. After the first exploration of their paltry caves, it's not worth going back.



# LORE III

## UPPER GLADSTONE

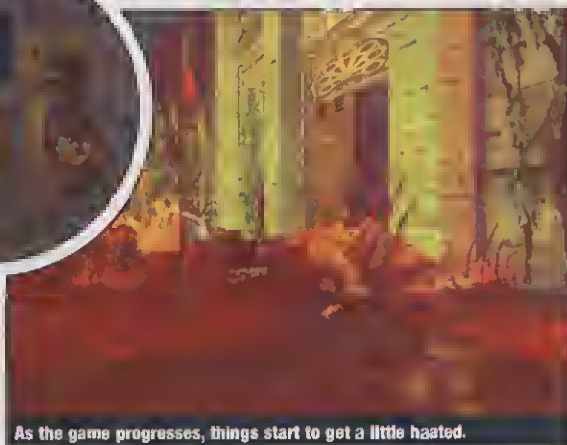
The place where monsters play

This is where you find Gladstone's guilds, as well as Gladstone Keep. Ideally you should visit the Keep at least once. It's not an integral part of the game, but it does add a little something to the plot.

When you first arrive at Upper Gladstone, remember to smash as many barrels as possible – they contain items that can be useful on your quest.

Later in the game this important part of town is completely overrun by monsters. When this happens, new areas such as the Graveyard are revealed. Unfortunately the Guilds don't survive the onslaught, so if you have Guild business you need to attend to, make sure it's done before you find the fourth piece of the mirror.

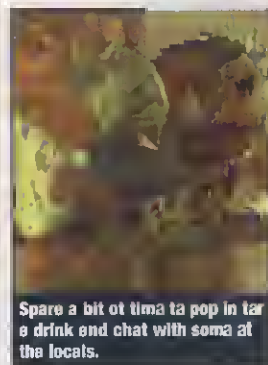
Never leave a barrel intact – you never know what you'll find.



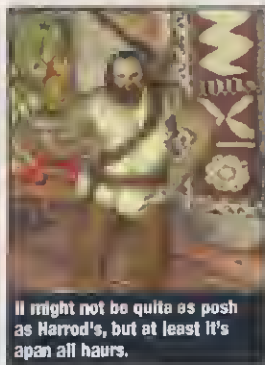
As the game progresses, things start to get a little heated.

## LOWER GLADSTONE

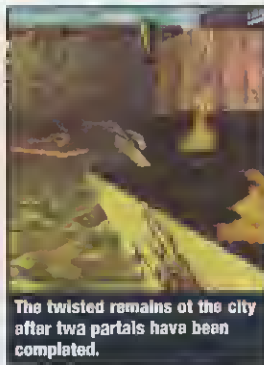
If shopping's your thing, then you're in the right place here



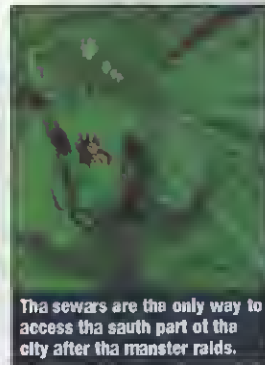
Spare a bit of time to pop in for a drink and chat with some of the locals.



It might not be quite as posh as Harrod's, but at least it's open all hours.



The twisted remains of the city after two portals have been completed.



The sewers are the only way to access the south part of the city after the monster raids.

This is the main part of town where Copper lives. You'll find shops in the southern part of the town over the river, so spare some time to browse through them. Also look out for grates and unlocked doors – thieves can have a grand time in this area if they search hard enough. Go into the pub too – there are a few

people in there who can offer you some helpful advice.

Sadly, it's not too long before Lower Gladstone also succumbs to the monster rampage. At this point the southern part of town becomes completely blocked off, and the only way to access it is through the sewers.

## GLADSTONE FOREST

You'd better hold on to your heart

The forest is home to many useful herbs, and a lot of vicious otherworldly beasts too.

Make use of whatever you can in here, and don't forget to stock up on the pork chops readily supplied by the abundant boars. This is a place you visit often. Get to know the route from one place to another, and if you get really lost try glancing at the signposts dotted around.

As with most other areas of Gladstone, the forest soon becomes a haven for a mixture of enemies from all five worlds. Stay on your guard and don't become complacent in here – it's not rare for a rift hound to appear from nowhere and rip your heart out.



The map gradually reveals itself as you play through the game.



You can also find interesting things in tree trunks.

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## THE FROZEN WASTES



Kill the two-faced cow before she kills you.

## THE FROZEN WASTES

Head through the Frozen Wastes, defeating the snow tigers as you go. At the White Tower you encounter Jacinda, leader of the tribe of warrior women who live there and keeper of the shard. You

## IN THE MIX

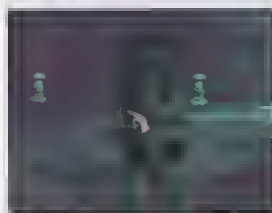
### Plants, herbs, potions and poisons

Clerics have the dubious pleasure of being the only class capable of mixing together ingredients to produce useful potions etc. As soon as Boris gets his meat, this eco-friendly ability is learnt automatically. From then on, every time a useful herb, plant, rock or lump of sap is picked up, your journal can provide information on what to mix it with. Items range from healing potions to ultra-deadly poisons.



Learn your herbs and you could save yourself a lot of money when it comes to buying healing potions.

have two options at this point: you can kill her immediately, or you can help her by destroying all the starks (fire-breathing chickens) that have overrun the Tower. Frankly, it's worth getting rid of her first and forgetting about the chickens, because even if you complete the task she still attacks you when you visit the throne room later for your 'reward'. So kill her, pick up the vault key, and go directly to the throne room to find the shard.



Don't believe a word they say - they're all liars and will betray you at the drop of a hat.

You are now transported back to the Dracule's Lair. Chat to Jakel, then proceed through the old caves (invading the orcs' lair while you're at it) and head towards the portal leading to Volcania.



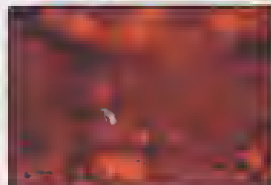
These frozen chickens are not your standard Iceland type, although using cold weapons does seem to kill them.

## VOLCANIA

A combination of nimble footwork to avoid the lava, and good long-range weaponry to wipe out those pesky firebugs should be enough to take you through to the final lava cave where Morphera (the hormonal dragon) awaits. You might actually encounter her up to three times on your way there, but unfortunately you're not able to defeat her until you reach that final cave.



Head towards the south of the forest to find the entrance to the volcano world.



Although small, these fire-breathing bugs pack quite a punch. It's best to use long-range attacks on them.

When you get there, run around the edge of the cave destroying the plugs. This stops the lava from flowing into the lake and prevents Morphera regenerating when you kill her.

With those out of the way simply wade in close and hack her to bits. When she's just about to die, run backwards and finish her off with range attacks so she doesn't kill you with her explosive

death. Collect the shard in the middle of the dried up lava lake and you're promptly transported back to the Dracule's Lair where Jakel awaits you.

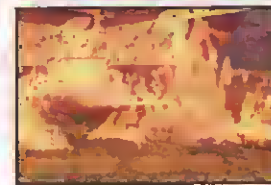


When you have long jump ability, return here, shoot the wall and jump in to pick up the secret item.

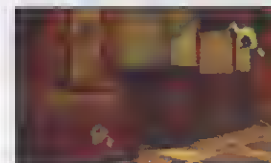
Back in Gladstone Forest, some more portals have opened up. Go through the Underworld portal in the north...

## THE UNDERWORLD

At the entrance to the portal, your thief friend gives you a key. Advance through the portal to find yourself in a stunningly atmospheric haunted house. Walk north until you reach the ballroom with an old grandfather clock standing between two lifts. Turn the key in this lock until the clock breaks. Use a lift to go upstairs, and turn right. Go through the last door on this side of the landing and open the cupboard door. The tormented ghost of a girl is here, and she wants you to stop the fire burning her for eternity. To do this, run quickly into the other bedrooms and empty the lamp oil before it sets the house on fire. Don't worry if you aren't quick enough and the flames kill you, as you're instantly resurrected at the cupboard and asked to try again. This cycle keeps going until you successfully drain the oil from the lamp and put the ghost out of its eternal torment.



Don't worry if you die in the flames, as you're given as many chances as you like to empty the lamp before it ignites.



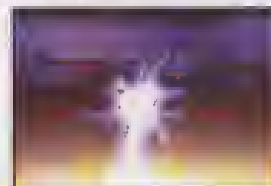
To make a phantom organist appear, turn the key until the clock breaks.

Go back downstairs and find the organist in the north end of the ballroom. To get him to bash out a tune, collect the sheet music

located down the hallway to the west of the front door of the house, and a bottle of wine which is down some stairs in the kitchen off the hallway to the east.



Give the organist a bottle of wine and a sheet of music and he'll soon be playing *My Old Man's A Dustman*.



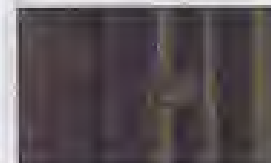
Shades are completely immune to blade attacks, so keep them at bay with a little long-range magic.

Go back to the ghostly Elton John and give him a bottle of wine. Once pepped up, give him the sheet music. Now we can rock 'n' roll. Get down with the ghost dancers and follow them through the secret passage up to the attic. Dash straight to the end of the room and overwind the clock/mirror containing all the lost souls. This makes the Scythe Reaper appear. Killing him is easy - get in nice and close and slice him with a sharp weapon. As long as you have plenty of healing items it's a piece of cake. If you're a mage you must now take a sample of the shard he's left behind; everybody else simply picks up the shard to be teleported back to Jakel at the Dracule's Lair.

Now it's time to go to the Ruloi Homeworld...

## THE RULOI HOMEWORLD

The key to winning this level is finding the Ruloi hand. To gain the hand, keep killing the yellow Ruloi Warriors until it appears. To ease your task, destroy all the regeneration pads - this stops the Ruloi reappearing after you've defeated one.

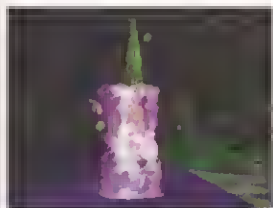


When you get the claw, put it in this keyhole to open the door.

Essentially this is a very straightforward level, as long as you have either a spell or item that protects you from poison (ie



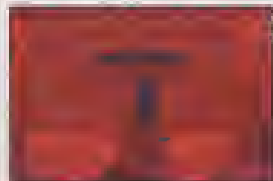
the stone bracers). Not only are you then immune to numerous spells, but you can also walk freely through the many acid pools scattered liberally around this acrid world.



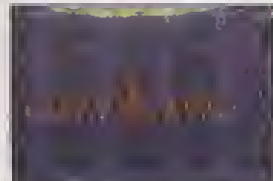
⚡ These strange turrets attack relentlessly, so destroy them as soon as possible.



⚡ Wearing stone bracers greatly reduces the effects of poison and magic spells hurled at you.



⚡ Destroy these regeneration pads so the Ruloi warriors don't completely overwhelm you.



⚡ One of the warrior women has been imprisoned here. If you free her, she instantly attacks you. Some thanks.

When you have the hand, go to either door with a claw inscribed on the lock and use it to go through. Jump on the teleport pad to be taken to the Ruloi Hive Mother. Once again, get as close as you can and keep hacking with a sharp object – her spongy flesh doesn't take this kind of attack too well and she soon dies,

leaving the shard on the floor nearby. Collect the shard to be returned to the Draracle's Lair. After you talk to Jakel, proceed to the Shattered Desert portal...

## THE SHATTERED DESERT

Do not enter this world unless you have some kind of protection from poison, or the radiation will fry you before you've barely set foot on the planet.

From the start, head through the canyons, killing as many of the mutants and monsters as you can. Remember that these things are basically immune to magic, so you need some kind of heavy cleaving weapon to do the job properly. The route through can become confusing, so keep your eyes open for vines that lead up to ledges and new areas. Also, don't forget to smash the piggy bank; incredibly, it contains 100,000 credits – handy. Eventually you must enter the cave that emits a strange buzzing sound and has wires hanging down. To reach this you can just make the jump from a nearby ledge.



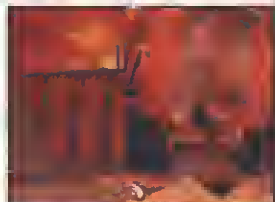
⚡ Smash this piggy bank for a huge cash bonus.



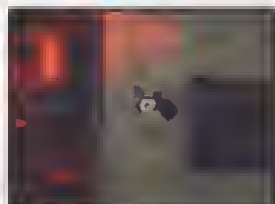
⚡ These mutated humans are perfect fodder for sharp blades.

Once in the cave, your troubles are just starting. As well as piling

up objects on top of each other (use the object manipulation key) to reach otherwise inaccessible passageways, you must find a robot eye to unlock a door, destroy computer panels, and shoot hanging live wires to stop yourself being electrocuted.



⚡ Once you've chatted with the babbling prospector, hit the switch by this crashed rocket to access the base of the 'wizard'.



⚡ Put the eye in the slot to open the door.



⚡ Once you've destroyed the force field generators, you're virtually there.

Once you gain entrance to the wizard (main computer), you must destroy the force field generators before you can destroy the computer. Just circle around the central area, taking out the shields with a long-range weapon, and the sentry guns preferably with a sword. With that done you can now face the main computer – what a joke, it's just six panels that can be destroyed with any weapon. Once you've picked up the shard, escape back through the caves before the base self-destructs, then when you're outside make your way back to the portal...

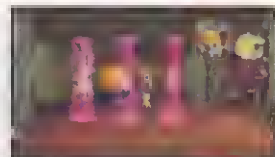
## THE FINAL BATTLE

Once you're back, go straight to Jakel at the Draracle's Lair. He teleports you into a pool of water. Turn around and climb up the rope. You find yourself in some kind of pulsating chamber with a pack of rift hounds. However, worse threats come from the four Jakel holograms that hurl a torrent of spells at you. To defeat these you need to be extremely well stocked up on healing items. Get in close to these spectres and keep hacking – avoid the pink columns and try some apparition spells of your own.

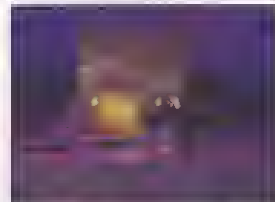


⚡ When you land in the pool, turn around and take hold of the rope behind you.

When they're defeated, turn the wheel that lowers the drawbridge, and then head for the final showdown. The real Jakel is no more difficult than the fake ones. Use the same aggressive manner, and after a long struggle you should be victorious. Pick up the seal that Jakel leaves and use it on the mirror.



⚡ If you want to use magic on the four fake Jakels, try using apparitions. Other than that, the sword is the only way.



⚡ Can you believe it? It was Jakel all along.



⚡ With Jakel out of the way, place the seal on the mirror to finish the game.

And that's it. Sit back, witness your soul return, and breathe a great big sigh of relief. **END**



THE FINAL BATTLE

At last, your soul returns.



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★ ANSWERS Warren 'Wazza' Christmas

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Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

## URBAN MYTH

**Q** I'm hoping that you, or someone you know, can prevent me from doing something silly! I'm sure I remember reading in a magazine about a first-person perspective game (I believe it was *Half-Life*, *Unreal* or one of those) being a bit tricky to uninstall. I think what was likely to happen if you hadn't installed it to the default directory (and I don't – my games go on my D drive) was that when you uninstalled it, the entire contents of that drive would be deleted, or something similar.

Please put me out of my suspense if you can. I need to do a bit of pruning but would like to avoid deleting everything on my drive!

Steve Lee

**A** We think you're referring to Bungie Software's *Myth II*, the original version of which could indeed delete the contents of your hard disk when uninstalled. However, this was only the case with the American version of the game, and it was very quickly withdrawn from sale at the end of last year. Oh, and it's not a first-person perspective shooter.

## WIN98 MINUS 3

**Q** This may sound silly, but where most people want to upgrade their computers, I want to *downgrade* mine. The problem is that I'm running Windows 98 and I want to change it back to Windows 95. Is it simply a case of uninstalling Win98 (I've still got the uninstall data on my PC) and installing Win95? Or is there more to it that I should know about?

Jamie Gilbert

**A** We can't really answer this, as it's not something that anyone here has done. The best advice we can give is to make sure you carefully back up all your important data before uninstalling. In the worst case scenario – that is, if something goes disastrously wrong – you can always re-install Windows 95 and your applications from scratch.

**“This may sound silly, but where most people want to upgrade their computers, I want to downgrade mine”**

JAMIE GILBERT

**£50 WINNER!**

## DIET WINDOWS

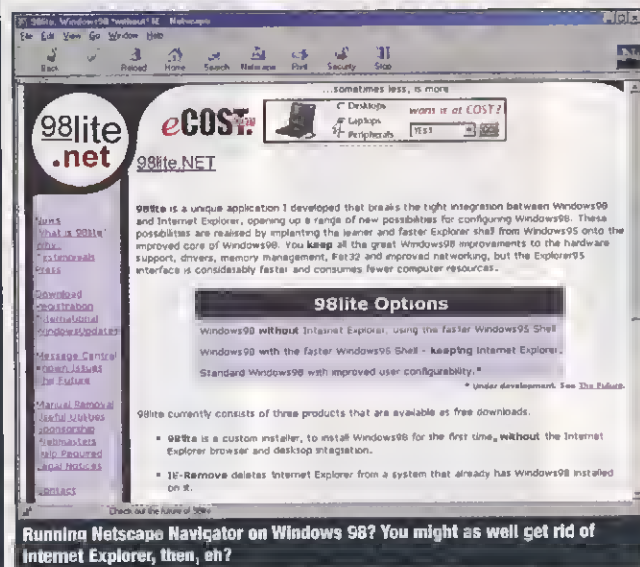
**Q** While perusing the information superhighway, I stumbled across a website called 98 Lite ([www.98lite.net](http://www.98lite.net)). This features some very useful downloads for Windows 98: 98lite enables you to install Windows 98 from scratch without Internet Explorer; IE Remove removes Internet Explorer from Windows 98 if you already have it installed; ShellSwap enables you to import the Windows 95 explorer into Windows 98 (which makes your system faster, and still

keeps Internet Explorer intact for web browsing).

The 98lite and IE Remove utilities might solve Explorer problems (ie crashing) that some people suffer from. All these files are free and very small, so they take just a few seconds to download.

Jamie Whittle

**A** We haven't had a chance to test these out, but we know a lot of people who would be interested in them, and we'd guess that includes a lot of readers. £50 is on its way, Jamie – probably the easiest money you've ever earned!



**Why are you ditching Windows 98 anyway? Before you do, you might want to read this month's £50 winner letter.**

## PACK-ED UP

**Q** I have a Packard Bell (Executive), and every two months or so it starts coming up with a Registry problem that says "Windows has encountered an error loading the system registry, please restart Windows". Then, when Windows restarts, the same error comes up!

I've phoned the Packard Bell hotline loads of times but they just say to place the master CD in the CD-ROM drive and wait till it's returned the computer to the factory settings. Is there any other

way to stop this error coming up, or any software to sort it out?

Tim Pearson

**A** "Every two months or so," you say? Weird. There's obviously something wrong with your Registry file, but without more detail it's impossible to say what exactly. Assuming you're running Windows 98, try running Registry Checker, details of which are in the next letter. Spooky!

## SYS INFO

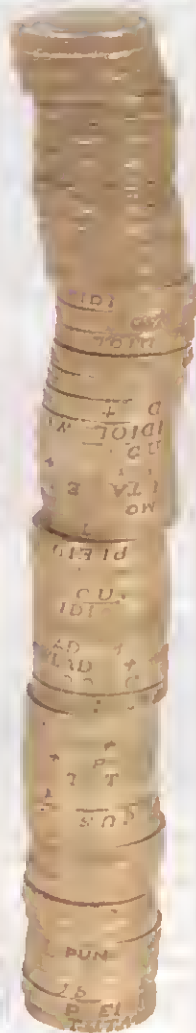
**Q** After Jonathan Rudge pointed out two handy utilities in the June issue (PCZ #77), I realised that many people might not be aware of how

Microsoft meant you to get access to these and a plethora of other handy apps hidden within the silky smooth exterior of Windows 98.

If you click Start/Programs/Accessories/System Tools/System Information, you should be presented with the MS System Information utility. If you then pull down the Tools menu, you can see a whole host of things that you never knew existed.

I found the Version Conflict Manager very handy, as it tells you which files Windows 98 had problems with when it was installing – which sometimes leads to errors – and enables you to restore the MS-approved files.

Stuart MacDonald





**A** Don't you just love these undocumented features? Actually, given that Windows 98 doesn't usually come with a proper manual, I guess all features are undocumented (on paper, at least). Whatever, thanks to Stuart for bringing the menu to our attention, and to the rest of you who wrote in on the subject (including Danny Morris, Alex Laing and Aaron Koppelow).

There are several tools which can be accessed from this menu in System Information, including the System File Checker, System Configuration Utility, Registry Checker, Automatic Skip Driver Agent and DirectX diagnostic tool. Novice users should be aware that some of this stuff is pretty techie, but all the tools do have online help files.

Incidentally, for what it's worth, you can also access Sys Info via the About box from the Help menu of most Microsoft applications.

## WHAT PC?

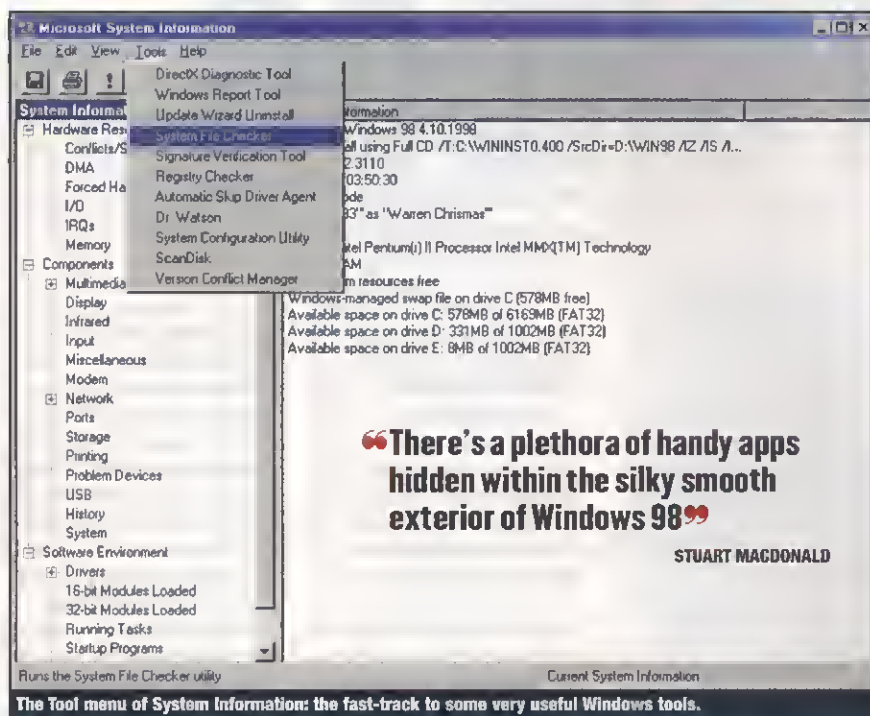
**Q** I have only recently purchased a PC, and have to admit to being almost completely ignorant on all matters computing. I have a fairly good relationship with the manager of our local Dixons, so when I wanted a computer I allowed myself to be fully guided by his recommendations (*This isn't necessarily a good idea, readers! - Ed*).

Anyway, while I'm very happy with my set-up, I'm not exactly sure quite what I've got! I haven't had problems when loading any games, but sometimes when I'm installing software the screen throws up a prompt asking if I've got 3Dfx, or what sound card I'm using, or some other similar question.

What I want to know is this: is there a way to get the system to show a list of its component parts on-screen? To help, I can tell you my system is an Advent 8700 Pentium III with a mouse, keyboard and speakers. It's what's inside the tall slim box that the CDs go in that I'm really interested in.

Steve Williams

**A** Strangely, we get asked this quite a lot. You can find everything you probably need to know by going to the Windows Control Panel and selecting System. The General page tells you how much memory (RAM) you have, and the Device Manager lists all the



**“There's a plethora of handy apps hidden within the silky smooth exterior of Windows 98”**

STUART MACDONALD

Installed components (double-click on any of the items for a list in each category). For a more detailed description, take a look at the main screen in – yes – System Information, details of which are in the previous letter.

## STEER CRAZY

**Q** I have a problem with my Interact V4 steering wheel, which refuses to calibrate in NASCAR Racing and can't be selected/loaded in Colin McRae Rally. I've tried to contact Interact at the address given in the manual (V4support@game shark.com), but email keeps being returned saying “No such user here”. Can anyone help?

O'Neill

**A** Interact probably can. There's a fair amount of information – including FAQs and drivers – on their American website (www.interact-acc.com). In the UK the products appear to be handled by a company called Recoton, so you should try contacting them. They have a customer helpline on 0161 702 5010, a website at www.rosscp.com, and can be emailed at help@rosscp.com.

## GRAND ADVICE

**Q** In response to Matt's letter in your June issue (PCZ#77): to get Grand Theft Auto to work with a 3Dfx Banshee, you simply do the following: start the game, press F11, then press the right arrow button and hit Enter. This changes the resolution to

800x600 in 32-bit. This works for me on an AMD K6-2 350 with a 16Mb Voodoo Banshee.

Paul Beauchamp

**A** We haven't been able to test this, but we'll take your word for it. Hope this helps you Banshee boys (and, er, girls).

## POWER-UP

**Q** I don't know what's wrong with my PC. I play a game then shut it down, but when I turn it on there's sometimes a message that says no signal input. I leave it a few minutes, then it works fine. What the hell is wrong with it?

Callum Reid

**A** Hmm... We assume it's the monitor (not the PC) complaining at not having a signal. This is probably caused by the monitor powering up a split second before the computer, and it should clear once the PC gets going. Have you tried switching the monitor off and then back on when it does this? Are we missing something obvious here?

## ROGUE RODENT

**Q** I have a really annoying problem with my Microsoft three-button Intellimouse. If the CPU is not being used for a couple of minutes or more, the mouse screws up – the horizontal axis stops working, and when I try to move left or right it just moves the cursor up and down. I've resorted to restarting my computer, as shutting down any programs currently in use fails to work. I'm

fed up with going to the loo and coming back to find that my mouse has screwed up again. Please help.

Matt O'Mahoney

**A** Yeah, we imagine that could be pretty annoying. There's possibly an interrupt problem here, or maybe something wrong with the drivers, but really we haven't got a clue on this one. Anyone else had a similar problem?

## CHUMP MANAGER

**Q** I've played Championship Manager 3 non-stop since I got it. However, there's one slight problem. I'm in a Spanish league with the Italian and English leagues running in the background, on a P166 with 32Mb RAM. I'm top of the league and doing really well in Europe, but when I reach a certain point in the game it crashes every single time. I tried reinstalling it but still this error came up stating “V3.02 database.cpp 16465”, and the game shut down. I was wondering if it's a fault in the

game or is there something wrong with my computer? It always happens on the same date, too. I tried Eidos Interactive but haven't received a reply.

Christopher Carter

**A** You're running three leagues on a P166? Silimey. Whatever, it sounds like you've found a bug in the game. There were quite a few errors in the original version – perhaps not that surprising considering its complexity, but annoying all the same.

Sports Interactive have released a patch which we suggest you download (from www.champman.net or www.cm3.com) or get from last month's ZONE cover disc. Oh, and you'll be pleased to hear that your savgames will not be affected. Phew!

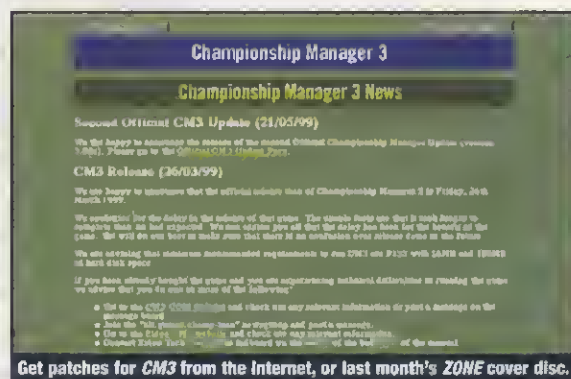
## LOCKED GATE

**Q** I bought a Gateway PC about six months ago, mainly to run games. I bought FIFA 99, Brian Lara and CM3. All installed okay... but none work. After contacting the software manufacturers for assistance, they said it was something to do with my DVD-ROM drive. Gateway say that it's nothing to do with them, and shuffled the blame back to Electronic Arts and Eidos etc. I don't know what to do. I have £90 worth of games sitting dormant, and no easy solution. What advice can you give?

Kane Simons

**A** The fact that all the games install okay suggests to us that there isn't a problem with the DVD-ROM drive. You say that “none work”, but without specific information we can't possibly suggest a fix.

If you bought the PC direct from Gateway, we assume that you have some kind of warranty and technical support back-up. If so, get back to them – they really should help you out. If they don't, let Watchdog know (you'll find contact details on page 126). **WZ**





# WATCHDOG

Complained? Argued? Shouted? And are still feeling ignored by the industry you support? Let **PC ZONE** take care of your consumer worries

★ ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

## LIVING IN A WORLD OF HURT?

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a tech problem, write to Ocar Wazza (page 124).

**WRITE TO** Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7JL.

**EMAIL us** at [letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk](mailto:letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk) with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

## MORE ON TINY

**Q** Two issues ago, Watchdog reported on how Tiny customers who wanted to get hold of manuals for their motherboards were being told that it was not possible. Tiny told us that the manuals were in fact available, and that the mistake had highlighted a "training issue" which has now been resolved. We subsequently received many letters of complaint from our readers on the same subject, two of whom had tried to get hold of the manuals after reading about it in Watchdog, but still to no avail.

We dropped Tiny a line to ask them what was going on. They replied with the following:

"Following our last correspondence, we have revised our procedure relating to motherboard information, as we want to provide a prompt and effective solution to this issue. Our policy is now to direct customers to the Microstar website at [msi.com.tw](http://msi.com.tw). Any information or manuals can then be viewed with Acrobat Reader, which is pre-installed on our machines."

So punters wanting to view

manuals now need to go online to do it. Watchdog asked what Tiny customers should do if they're not 'wired'. We were told: "It any customer does not have the means to access the Internet, we will endeavour to provide them with the information they require, in one form or another."

However, Watchdog thinks it's a shame that Tiny doesn't appear to provide motherboard manuals with their PCs in the first place.

## BT BILL HORROR!

**Q** I love playing games such as *Jedi Knight* and *Half-Life* on

the Internet, but my family and I were rather shocked when we got our phone bill. It was pretty high, and I've now got a time limit on Internet usage. This is bad, because I lead a *Half-Life* clan and need as much time online as possible.

Why is it that America and other countries get local calls for free (albeit with a flat rate monthly fee), yet we are made to suffer? It really ticks me off.

Ross Middlemiss

**A** It's back again to the old argument over the lack of 'free local calls' in the UK rears

## TINY TROUBLES

Make sure you get a full machine spec before you sign on the dotted line

**Q** I recently bought a new PC from Tiny Computers and the salesman in the showroom assured me the graphics card was 3Dfx compatible. On getting home and reviewing the documentation, it was apparent that the video card was a standard Intel AGP. I rang the showroom and was told: "Sorry, sir, nothing we can do. Ring our customer service hotline."

Unfortunately, the customer service line was continually engaged. So the PC arrived with the unwanted card and I had to buy a Phoenix Maxx Gamer Banshee to get the graphics I wanted. Faxed and written complaints to Tiny thus far have gone unanswered.

I have also discovered that the Tiny PC will not run any of the recent EA titles – *FA Premier Manager 99* and *SimCity 3000*. I thought it might be the Phoenix, but I contacted EA technical support who said they have received complaints from other people who have bought Tiny computers.

Apparently Tiny are using non-standard drivers on their hardware. Even though they supply a 'proper' copy of Win98, all the drivers are on their system Restore Pack. According to EA, the particular problem is the sound card SB64 PCI. To make matters worse, the Creative Labs website will only let you download updates to drivers, but not the full install disc.

There also appear to be no native Windows 98 drivers for the DVD/CD-ROM drive and no sign of any on either of the two CDs supplied by Tiny. Once again I tried ringing Tiny customer service (continually engaged) and technical support (I was put into a queue which was not answered).

I have written a further complaint to Tiny advising them that I am unhappy with the PC and wish to return it. I would be obliged if Watchdog could investigate Tiny.

Vernon Moorhouse

**A** Watchdog subsequently received a follow-up email from Vernon saying that he'd fitted a new sound card because the integrated one was causing problems with *SimCity 3000*, *FA Premier Manager*, *Railroad Tycoon 2* and *Rollercoaster Tycoon*. He also told us that Tiny had reportedly denied any liability and had stated

that it was his responsibility to check that the spec of the new machine met his requirements. Vernon bemoaned that he'd now spent £140 on the computer and was disillusioned with Tiny's after-sales service.

All this information was passed onto Tiny for their perusal, and they supplied Watchdog with a copy of a letter they sent to Vernon addressing his complaints:

"The system you purchased was supplied with a 30 AGP accelerated graphics card, not a 3Dfx card, and this would have been made clear at the point of sale.

"It was explained to you in our letter dated 12 February that the drivers for the VGA card and sound card are contained on the system Restore Pack. However, as updated drivers become available, these are posted on the Tiny BBS and on the Tiny website.

"The problems you are experiencing with your software and compatibility with the Creative Labs SB64 PCI sound card chipset have been resolved by the software house Electronic Arts. This patch is also posted on the Tiny BBS and website. However, this problem did not affect Tiny alone, but also any PC manufacturer who used this integrated chipset – once Electronic Arts became aware of this, the matter was quickly resolved."

Tiny went on to apologise about the problems that Vernon had experienced with their customer support, and said that they are in the process of installing further telephone lines and recruiting new staff.

However, Vernon sent another email to Watchdog – which we forwarded to Tiny – stating he was adamant that the salesman had told him it was a Vooodoo2 Banshee card; that no interest had been shown by the showroom to resolve his problems other than to refer him back to the customer service hotline; that EA products weren't the only games affected by the sound card issue; and that

he would like some kind of gesture for the extra money he's spent on the system.

Fortunately for Vernon, there was light at the end of the tunnel, as Tiny responded to Watchdog directly:

"Our showrooms are intended to display our products and service customers' pre-delivery requirements. From that point on, all customer service or technical issues are handled by our purpose-built call centre at Redhill. We are disappointed to hear that Mr Moorhouse was unable to contact us, as the majority of our calls are answered within two minutes. To improve this still further, over the past six months we have invested £0.5m in new telephony to provide a consistently excellent level of service.

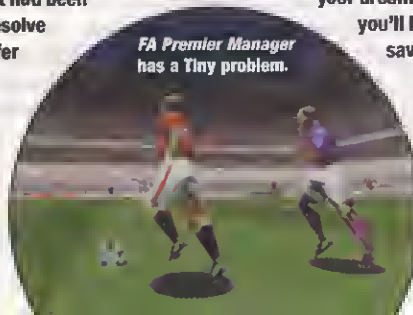
"We appreciate Mr Moorhouse's comments relating to EA products, but reiterate our view that, had he made contact with us, we could have resolved the issue to his satisfaction.

"Regarding our on-site warranty cover, had there been a hardware failure we would of course have been happy to help. However, this was not the case, as the issues related to software and the specification of the machine. As a gesture of goodwill, we are willing to reimburse Mr Moorhouse 50 per cent of the cost of the VGA and sound cards he has purchased. We do value his custom, and look forward to being of further assistance."

Watchdog advised Vernon to take Tiny up on their offer – which he subsequently did. In the meantime, the above situation underlines how important it is to get a full list of your PC's spec before you sign anything. If your dream PC turns up with incorrect parts, you'll have the spec list to quote from to save confusion at a later stage.

As for the delays in getting through on the customer service lines, Watchdog will be carrying out a special investigation over the next couple of months.

*FA Premier Manager has a Tiny problem.*





its ugly head yet again – it's been a thorn in the side of many a disgruntled Internet user for years now. Watchdog asked BT to provide us with their reasons for not offering a similar service to those found Stateside, and they gave us the following reply:

"In the US, the picture varies according to the telecom carrier and to the area, but costs are generally met either through a cross subsidy from other calls such as long distance calls, which are therefore more expensive than they would be otherwise, or from a higher, fixed-rate charge like subscription or higher line rental. Why should other phone users subsidise people surfing the Net?

"Even the US situation is confusing. For example, Bell Atlantic offers untimed calls to residential customers in Washington, Boston, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, but not New York. And there's a split between residential customers and single-line businesses: SBC in Los Angeles and San Francisco offer untimed calls to residential customers, but not to small businesses.

"With Internet use there is no incentive to log off. A study in California by PacBell showed that 30 per cent of dial-up Internet sessions lasted three hours, and more than seven per cent lasted 24 hours or more. They also found that 62 of their exchanges experienced online congestion which hit the quality of service for other customers.

"BT is regulated by OfTel. It BT wanted to offer 'free' calls, OfTel would have to be convinced that BT was not trying to damage a competitor."

While the possibility of 'free calls' may be a long way off yet, if you want to stick with BT, their PremierLine and Friends & Family schemes can garner reasonable discounts off your local calls.

In the meantime, what do readers make of BT's response? Let us know your thoughts.

## SUBTITLES FOLLOW-UP

**Q** I'd thought I'd write after reading the 'More Subtitles Please' letter in Watchdog #76. I remember a world before hi-tech sound cards enabled the use of

speech in games, and games makers had to make do with text. Perhaps with the arrival of new technology games makers felt justified in leaving out text and replacing it with speech. Don't they realise that in doing so they've made playing games more difficult and a lot less enjoyable for a fair proportion of their customers?

In an industry where games have huge budgets and may take years to be coded, there is simply no excuse not to have at least the option of text instead of speech, and perhaps even an option of a visual warning where normally there'd be a noise.

New legislation coming into power over the next couple of years will make it a legal obligation for the TV industry to supply a percentage of its programs with either signed interpretation and/or subtitles.

**"Why is it that America and other countries get local calls for free (albeit with a flat monthly fee) yet we are made to suffer?"**

ROSS MIDDLEMISS

Why doesn't this law apply to all appropriate media? After all, that's what computer games are – just another entertainment medium?

Wayne Horsfall

**A** You make some fair points, Warren, and Watchdog is sure that as games are taken more seriously as an entertainment medium by legislators (other than wanting to censor controversial titles), such laws will in time apply to the software scene as well. Watchdog appreciates, though, that the current situation isn't ideal for people who are hard of hearing, and hopes that software companies will make the necessary adjustments off their own backs without the

need for government intervention.

In the meantime, there is some good news for the reader whose hard of hearing friend wanted text instead of speech in *Half-Life*. Reader Michael Davis has discovered a document at the Sierra website which contains the script for the entire game. You can find it at [www.sierra.com/demos/preview/0,1690,2075,00.html](http://www.sierra.com/demos/preview/0,1690,2075,00.html).

## CITIZENS REVOLT!

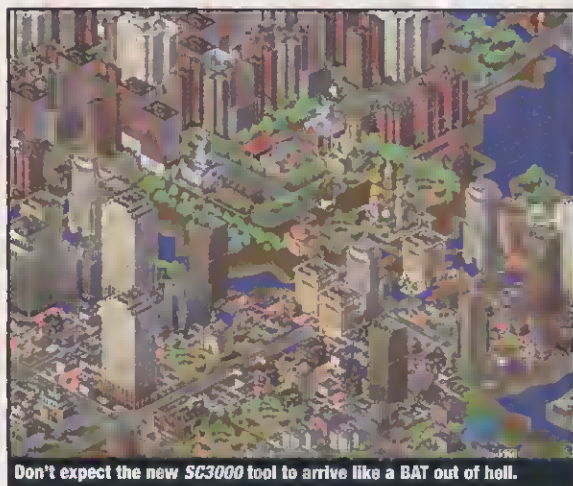
**Q** Maxis promised us the BAT (Building Architects Tool) when *SimCity 3000* was released, but it still hasn't appeared. Lots of people are starting to complain about this on the message board at [www.simcity.com](http://www.simcity.com), yet Maxis don't seem to be paying any attention. They haven't even put anything up on the site giving a rough idea of when it will be out.

Any chance you could contact them and find out about this mythical BAT? I (and everyone who messages the board) would be very grateful if you could.

Danny Morris

**A** A quick naffer with EA (publishers of *SC3000*) yielded the following: "The Building Architects Tool is in development and is expected in the summer, although a release date has yet to be confirmed. Because Maxis prides itself on releasing the best quality software, it sometimes experiences delays to the release dates of its games and add-on packages. Please keep an eye on the message board for further updates."

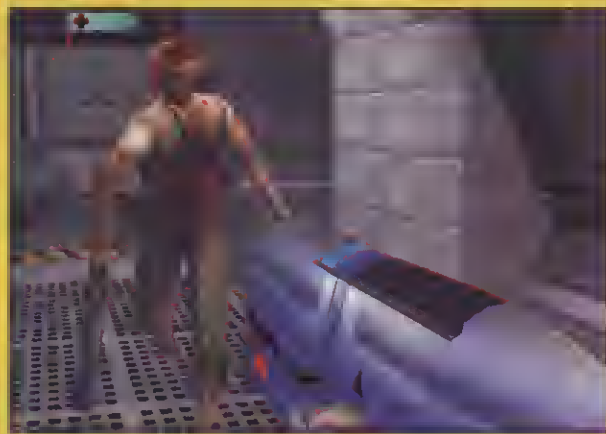
Fingers crossed...



Don't expect the new *SC3000* tool to arrive like a BAT out of hell.

# PCZONE

## COMING NEXT ISSUE SYSTEM SHOCK 2



From the same developers as the ones behind *Thief: The Dark Project* comes *System Shock 2*, the sequel to the finest sci-fi RPG ever made. Using the same Dark engine as Looking Glass' previous game, *System Shock 2* is sure to become the benchmark for all future 3D RPGs. Needless to say Paul Mallinson has been rubbing his sweaty Northern palms in anticipation, and has been making sure his PC is in tip top order.

## THE FINEST COVER CD DEMOS

No *TA: Kingdoms* demo this month, but next month we hope to bring you the EXCLUSIVE demo of Cavedog's sequel to the best real-time strategy game since *Command & Conquer*. Okay, so it's trolls and wizards, but for fast-paced action in a tactical setting there's no equal. If all goes to plan we may also find room for pirate strategy *Cutthroats* from Eidos, makers of *Gangsters*, among many others.

## HONEST REVIEWS

Apart from *System Shock 2*, we'll have full and comprehensive reviews including *Heavy Gear 2*, *Outcast*, *Links Extreme* and the latest in the *Need For Speed* series. Online dungeoneers: prepare for the ultimate showdown as *Ultima Online* goes head to head with *EverQuest*.

## TIPS, CHEATS AND WALKTHROUGHS

Mark Hill is currently scribbling notes on how to get ahead in *Star Trek: Birth Of The Federation*. Once he's crowned Master of the Universe, we'll bring you his plan for galactic domination. We'll also have hints and tips for *Aliens Vs Predator*, more cheats and hints, and our own A-Z of computer mumbo jumbo.

## INSIGHTFUL PREVIEWS

We've gone RPG crazy, with Richard Garriott speaking to us about the latest in the *Ultima* series, *Ultima: Ascension*. It beards and wizards aren't your thing, maybe news on the latest *Star Trek* games will get your gaming juices flowing. We'll also have full reports on *Black & White*, *Battlezone II*, *B-17 Flying Fortress II* and *X-Beyond The Frontier*. Plus a few more, of course.

# ON SALE THURSDAY 29 JULY

\* Note: this is a guide only, content may change due to circumstances beyond our control

# TOP 100

Welcome to the **PC ZONE** Top 100. Here you'll find the games that in our expert opinion are the current top PC games in their field, as well as a few extras you might like to consider if you're a big fan of the genre

## ACTION GAMES



### QUAKE II

**PCZ #59 • 97%**

⊕ The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "Quake II is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.  
**PUBLISHER** Activision • 01895 456700



### HALF-LIFE

**PCZ #71 • 95%**

⊕ Arriving a whole year late but definitely worth the wait, this has to be the 3D shooter of the year thanks to a superb single-player game. We'll have to wait and see whether it will beat Quake II in the deathmatch arena.  
**PUBLISHER** Sierra • 0118 9209100



### PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING

**PCZ #44 • 94%**

⊕ The ultimate mix of space combat, Elite-style trading and FMV action, Privateer 2 was the first big budget release from Origin which used live action in a positive way. Absolutely packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.  
**PUBLISHER** Origin/EA • 01753 549442



### FORSAKEN

**PCZ #63 • 94%**

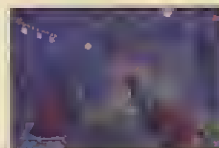
⊕ Descent is dead and Forsaken is now king of the tunnel-based shoot 'em ups. With huge, varied levels, heaps of graphical effects, weapons and a fantastic multiplayer LAN-based game, it's up there with the best of 'em.  
**PUBLISHER** Acclaim • 0171 344 5000



### WARGASM

**PCZ #71 • 93%**

⊕ Famed for their flight sims, DID finally deliver an action game only they could produce. With helicopters, APCs, and hapless infantry running about, this is as fast-paced as a tank game could be – and it's even better to share.  
**PUBLISHER** Infogrames • 0181 738 8199



### SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

**PCZ #71 • 92%**

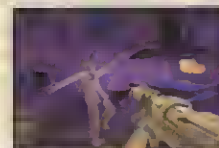
⊕ Half Quake, half MechWarrior, this 3D action game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. With great graphical effects and an involving storyline, it's perhaps just a bit too easy for the Quake hard-core.  
**PUBLISHER** Microids • 00331 4601 5401



### KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME

**PCZ #77 • 92%**

⊕ This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. And the multiplayer aspect should prove fiery opposition to any other game out there.  
**PUBLISHER** Interplay • 01628 423666



### SIN

**PCZ #70 • 91%**

⊕ Until Duke 4Ever appears, Sin is the closest in feel to its ageing classic predecessor. Based on the Quake II engine, Sin offers a superb single-player game thanks to some ingenious level design. Highly recommended.  
**PUBLISHER** Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



### TOMB RAIDER III

**PCZ #72 • 91%**

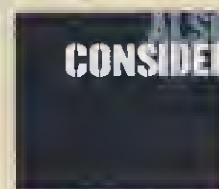
⊕ There's a good chance that in 20 years' time the Tomb Raider 'thingy' will be looked upon with as much fondness as Star Wars is today. This third outing may not be as ground-breaking as its predecessor, but it's the best so far.  
**PUBLISHER** Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



### JEDI KNIGHT / MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

**PCZ #74 • 90%**

⊕ As a double pack, this ageing 3D shooter and its expansion disk represents outstanding value for money. Dated graphics, but the level design is superb and the missions are some of the best ever made.  
**PUBLISHER** LucasArts/Activision • 01895 4567000



**THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT** Eidos Interactive • PCZ #72 • 90%

**TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX Take 2** • PCZ #69 • 89%

**UNREAL** GT Interactive • PCZ #65 • 93%

**QUAKE** Activision • PCZ #43 • 96% **BUDGET**

**ALIENS VS PREDATOR** Fox Interactive • PCZ #77 • 89%

**REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL** Ubi Soft • PCZ #50 • 90%

**STARSIERGE UNIVERSE** Sierra • PCZ #76 • 88%



**RACING GAMES****CARMAGEDDON II****PCZ #69 • 95%**

★ It's that game again, this time with full 3D pedestrians. More blood, more cars, more tracks – and now with added missions. If you liked the first one, you'll love this one. If you don't, you can just bog off.

**PUBLISHER** SCI • 0171 585 3308**TOCA 2****PCZ #76 • 93%**

★ Predictably, Codemasters have done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.

**PUBLISHER** Codemasters • 01926 814132**COLIN MCRAE RALLY****PCZ #68 • 93%**

★ Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* has become the new benchmark in rally simulations. With car customisability and a heap of multiplayer accessibility, this game should be top of everyone's rally games heap.

**PUBLISHER** Codemasters • 01926 814132**MONACO GRAND PRIX****PCZ #69 • 92%**

★ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. It looks beautiful, plays even better, and the AI is second to none. You need a hefty machine to have it looking its best though.

**PUBLISHER** Ubi Soft • 081 944 9000**GRAND THEFT AUTO****PCZ #58 • 92%**

★ This is the game that took over from *Carmageddon* as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. *Micro Machines* on acid.

**PUBLISHER** BMG • 0171 973 0011**NEED FOR SPEED III****PCZ #69 • 91%**

★ Some arcade racing games are fun, but if you like a bit more than just just racing around a few tracks then you should seriously consider *Need For Speed III*. Why? Because it avoiding the law isn't fun, what is?

**PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts • 01753 549442**MOTOCROSS MADNESS****PCZ #67 • 91%**

★ An astoundingly addictive game. Loads of game and race options and tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. Available with the pad for around 50 quid. A must-buy.

**PUBLISHER** Microsoft • 0345 002000**MICRO MACHINES 3****PCZ #64 • 90%**

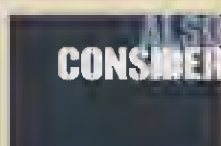
★ The manic miniature racing game gets the 3D treatment and loses nothing along the way. The new power-ups might not please the purist, but *Micro Machines 3* is still one of the finest two-player games around.

**PUBLISHER** Codemasters • 01926 814132**GRAND PRIX LEGENDS****PCZ #69 • 90%**

★ Papyrus, the makers of *NASCAR* and *IndyCar*, have put the danger back into Formula 1. If you fancy a challenge and the chance to go back to the teams and drivers of 1967, then buy this. You'll need a steering wheel though.

**PUBLISHER** Sierra • 0118 920 9100**BREAKNECK****PCZ #78 • 89%**

**NEW ENTRY** Not only is this the fastest driving game out there, it also has enough options, tracks and vehicles to keep even occasional racers enthralled. Add to this the superb graphics, and you can see why *Breakneck* is a winner.

**PUBLISHER** THQ • 01483 767656**FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2** MicroProse • PCZ #36 • 95%**SCREAMER 2** Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% **BUDGET****DESTRUCTION DERBY 2** Psychosis • PCZ #46 • 86% **BUDGET****MOTORHEAD** Gremlin Interactive • PCZ #63 • 90%**TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP**Europress • PCZ #59 • 86% **BUDGET****ULTIMATE RACE PRO** MicroProse • PCZ #62 • 88% **BUDGET****SPORTS GAMES****LINKS LS****PCZ #43 • 94%**

★ The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, lush graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.

**PUBLISHER** Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000**TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF****PCZ #69 • 93%**

★ Beautifully presented, as always, and sporting a speedy enhanced graphics engine, this latest in the *PGA* series also gets star endorsement by young Tiger Woods. Without question, this is the best golf game yet.

**PUBLISHER** EA Sports • 01753 549442**NHL 99****PCZ #70 • 92%**

★ The problem with all ice hockey games is the confusion that ensues after each ruck. *NHL 99* is no different in that respect, but updated graphics, enhanced AI and spiffy presentation make this game a must for fans of the sport.

**PUBLISHER** EA Sports • 01753 549442**PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97****PCZ #53 • 92%**

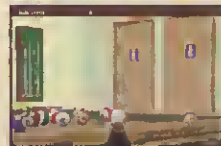
★ This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.

**PUBLISHER** Codemasters • 01926 814132**FIFA 99****PCZ #71 • 92%**

★ Another biannual release from EA Sports that, as per usual, is better than the last. You'll have to think long and hard before shelling out another £40, but if you love footie it's well worth it for the best football game available for the PC.

**PUBLISHER** EA Sports • 01753 549442**SENSIBLE SOCCER EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION****PCZ #69 • 90%**

★ It's still top-down, and it's still simple, fast and fun. *World Cup '98* may be prettier, but it can only dream of being as instantly playable as *Sensible Soccer European Club Edition*.

**PUBLISHER** GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791**VIRTUAL POOL 2****PCZ #58 • 90%**

★ Okay, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3Dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

**PUBLISHER** Interplay • 01628 423666**THE GOLF PRO****PCZ #62 • 90%**

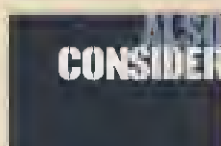
★ If you're bored with either *PGA* or *Links*, then this is the best of the 'mouse-swing' bunch. Good course design and some excellent tuition means there's loads of gameplay, though the putting lets it down a tad.

**PUBLISHER** Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337**ACTUA SOCCER 3****PCZ #72 • 89%**

★ Although better than last year's effort, *Actua 3* fails to snatch the title from EA this time around. Mind you, with a good range of options and a huge range of teams to play against, this certainly has a longer shelf life than *FIFA*.

**PUBLISHER** Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601**NBA LIVE 99****PCZ #73 • 87%**

★ Being an EA Sports title, *NBA Live 99* is, unsurprisingly, the best game in its field. If you're a Sprite-drinking hoop fan, there's plenty here to justify shelling out for the annual upgrade. If you're not, you'll neither know nor care.

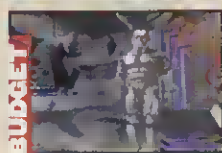
**PUBLISHER** EA Sports • 01753 549442

★ There's always a swell of different sports game types depending on the current sporting season. These are worth having a look at...

**JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL** Virgin Interactive • PCZ #68 • 88%**MADDEH NFL 99** EA Sports • PCZ #71 • 87%**TRIPLE PLAY 99** Electronic Arts • PCZ #64 • 90%**BRIAN LARA CRICKET** Codemasters • PCZ #75 • 85%



## ADVENTURE GAMES



**BIOFORGE** **PCZ #25 • 95%**  
 ★ Futuristic *Alone in the Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.  
**PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



**SYSTEM SHOCK** **PCZ #20 • 95%**  
 ★ This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the genre. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is still invigorating.  
**PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



**DISCWORLD II** **PCZ #44 • 93%**  
 ★ Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld II* is a universally appealing adventure game.  
**PUBLISHER** Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000



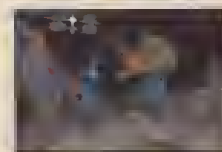
**INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS** **PCZ #37 • 93%**  
 ★ Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.  
**PUBLISHER** LucasArts/ME • 0171 368 2255



**LRA 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY** **PCZ #54 • 93%**  
 ★ Twinsen is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area in *LBA 2*, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great-looking and hugely atmospheric adventure. A must for adventure fans.  
**PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



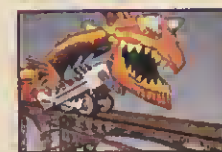
**SAM & MAX** **PCZ #11 • 93%**  
 ★ The hilarious dog/rabbit duo's first and only PC outing. In which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a point-and-click fan.  
**PUBLISHER** LucasArts/ME • 0171 368 2255



**RESIDENT EVIL II** **PCZ #75 • 90%**  
 ★ Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore make for top entertainment. Be afraid. Be very afraid.  
**PUBLISHER** Virgin • 0171 368 2255



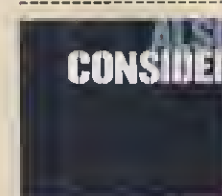
**MONKEY ISLAND ADVENTURE PACK** **PCZ #74 • 90%**  
 ★ *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.  
**PUBLISHER** LucasArts/Activision • 01985 4567000



**GRIM FANDANGO** **PCZ #71 • 90%**  
 ★ LucasArts not only do the best adventure games, but have also recently been doing the only adventure games worth buying. This latest has style written all over it, and hopefully signals a rosy future for fans of the genre.  
**PUBLISHER** LucasArts • 0171 368 2255



**KING'S QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY** **PCZ #71 • 89%**  
 ★ To mark the genre's transition from point-and-click to a full 3D interface, Sierra's eighth *King's Quest* adventure proves an engaging stopgap, even if it is a little too Americanised. Good but not great.  
**PUBLISHER** Sierra • 0118 920 9100

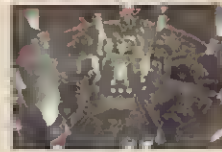


**FULL THROTTLE** Virgin • PCZ #27 • 92% **BUDGET**  
**THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE** Virgin • PCZ #43 • 92%  
**REDGUARD** Virgin • PCZ #75 • 89%  
**GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN** Candant • PCZ #36 • 88%  
**LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE** Electronic Arts • PCZ #21 • 93% **BUDGET**

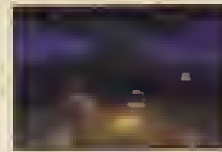
## ROLE-PLAYING GAMES



**ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS** **PCZ #1 • 94%**  
 ★ This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.  
**PUBLISHER** Origin/EA • 01753 549442



**FINAL FANTASY VII** **PCZ #66 • 93%**  
 ★ Fearsomely addictive gem of a game of truly epic proportions. Great graphics, plenty of hidden surprises and massive levels will keep you totally absorbed if you forgive the risible dialogue and turn-based combat.  
**PUBLISHER** Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



**REALMS OF THE HAUNTING** **PCZ #47 • 93%**  
 ★ Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it back in issue 47. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap, *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.  
**PUBLISHER** Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



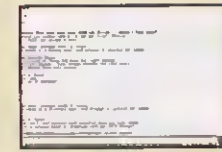
**LANDS OF LORE III** **PCZ #74 • 90%**  
 ★ Westwood know how to tell a good story, and this latest in the series is the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *LOLIII* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.  
**PUBLISHER** Westwood/EA • 01753 549442



**ULTIMA VII** **PCZ #3 • 89%**  
 ★ Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Check out the *Ultima Collection* for a real treat.  
**PUBLISHER** Origin/EA • 01753 549442



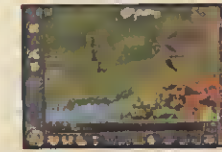
**DIABLO** **PCZ #48 • 88%**  
 ★ Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.  
**PUBLISHER** Zabalac/Blizzard • 01626 332233



**TERRIS** **PCZ #44 • 88%**  
 ★ A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but it's so addictive that we're still playing it. The various quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.  
**PUBLISHER** ADL • 0800 279 7444



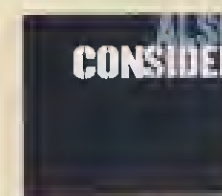
**FALLOUT 2** **PCZ #71 • 86%**  
 ★ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you like the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper.  
**PUBLISHER** Interplay • 01628 423666



**BALDUR'S GATE** **PCZ #73 • 85%**  
 ★ With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.  
**PUBLISHER** Interplay • 01628 423666

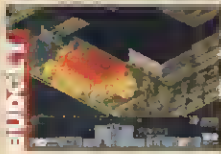


**ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS** **PRE-PC ZONE**  
 ★ This took role-playing games away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history.  
**PUBLISHER** Origin/EA • 01753 549442



★ These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat to other game types over the last couple of years. However, also bear in mind...  
**DIABLO: HELLFIRE** Candant • PCZ #59 • 82%  
**ULTIMA COLLECTION** Electronic Arts • PCZ #62 • 90%  
**RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHECY** Mindscape • PCZ #25 • 78%



**STRATEGY GAMES**

**X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE** **PCZ #52 • 95%**  
 ✪ A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.  
**PUBLISHER** MicroProse • 01454 893893



**TA: KINGDOMS NEW ENTRY** **PCZ #78 • 942%**  
 ✪ TA puts on a pointy hat and grows a six-toot beard for this long-awaited sequel. Don't be put off by the fantasy setting, this is a real strategy masterpiece. From the gorgeous animation to the AI, *Kingdoms* exudes class.  
**PUBLISHER** Cavedog • 888 477 9369



**AGE OF EMPIRES** **PCZ #54 • 94%**  
 ✪ Imagine *Civilization* II's great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.  
**PUBLISHER** Microsoft • 0345 002000



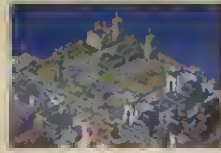
**CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3** **PCZ #73 • 93%**  
 ✪ No fancy graphics, no sound and no online multiplayer options do nothing to hide the fact that *Champ Manager 3* is one of the most addictive games you'll ever play. Forty quid for a season ticket to nirvana? Bloody bargain, mate.  
**PUBLISHER** Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



**POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING** **PCZ #70 • 92%**  
 ✪ The original *Populous* was the game that put Bullfrog into orbit and made Peter Molyneux one of the biggest names in the industry. Now Peterless, the new Bullfrog team show that they can do just as well without him.  
**PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



**MAGIC & MAYHEM** **PCZ #70 • 92%**  
 ✪ Based on the old Spectrum game *Chaos*, *X-COM* creators Mythos deliver a diverse and original fantasy strategy game. A strong single-player element and a manic multiplayer game make this a well-deserving classic.  
**PUBLISHER** Virgin • 0171 368 2255



**SIMCITY 3000** **PCZ #74 • 92%**  
 ✪ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.  
**PUBLISHER** Maxis/EA • 01753 549442



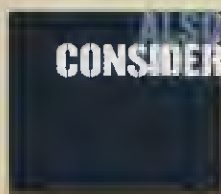
**SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI** **PCZ #74 • 92%**  
 ✪ *Civilization II* was, and still is, one of the greatest strategy games ever made, and *Alpha Centauri* is everything a true sequel should be. Rather than create another remake, Sid Meier has created the game *Civ* fans have been crying out for for years.  
**PUBLISHER** Firaxis/EA • 01753 549442



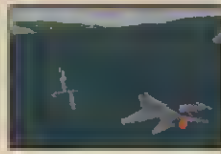
**WARZONE 2100** **PCZ #75 • 90%**  
 ✪ Both Westwood and Cavedog have dismissed full 3D in strategy games on the grounds that AI would suffer as a result of incorporating it. *Warzone* proves them both wrong, looks gorgeous and plays as good as *Total Annihilation*.  
**PUBLISHER** Eidos • 0181 636 3000



**CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER** **PCZ #75 • 89%**  
 ✪ Replacing *Civ II* in this list with this remake was a difficult decision. *Call To Power* may do more than *Civ II*, but it takes too long to get into the guts of the game. You'll still love it, but if you're skint get *Civ II* on budget.  
**PUBLISHER** Activision • 01895 4567000



**WARLORDS II: DARKLORDS RISING** Broderbund • PCZ #67 • 90%  
**BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION** MicroProse • PCZ #78 • 89%  
**COMMANDOS** Eidos Interactive • PCZ #66 • 87%  
**DUNGEON KEEPER** Electronic Arts • PCZ #53 • 96% **BUDGET**  
**MASTER OF ORION 2** MicroProse • PCZ #45 • 92% **BUDGET**  
**COMMANDO & CONQUER: RED ALERT VIE** PCZ #47 • 94%  
**CAESAR III** Sierra • PCZ #70 • 92%  
**TOTAL ANNIHILATION** GT Interactive • PCZ #56 • 92%

**FLIGHT SIMULATION GAMES**

**FALCON 4.0** **PCZ #72 • 95%**  
 ✪ After waiting literally years for this, the wait was worth it. With 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure, *Falcon 4.0* can fly against the best of them – and win. One of the best flight sims ever seen.  
**PUBLISHER** MicroProse • 01454 893893



**F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR** **PCZ #68 • 95%**  
 ✪ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece is perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this one.  
**PUBLISHER** Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633



**FLIGHT SIM 98** **PCZ #55 • 94%**  
 ✪ Another year, and yet another flight sim to come from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and hugely impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.  
**PUBLISHER** Microsoft • 0345 002000



**APACHE HAVOC** **PCZ #73 • 94%**  
 ✪ Of the three main chopper sims available, *Longbow 2* is the one it you're a hard-core sim head, *Team Apache* is the choice for fans whose preference swings the other way, and *Apache Havoc* straddles the gap. And the graphics are to die for.  
**PUBLISHER** Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



**LONGBOW 2** **PCZ #59 • 92%**  
 ✪ "Longbow 2 is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review. If you don't have any extra graphics hardware, there's only one thing to do – think 'upgrade', 'upgrade' and 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.  
**PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



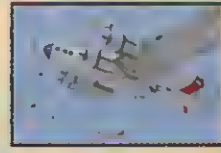
**JANE'S F-15** **PCZ #64 • 92%**  
 ✪ A hard-core propeller-head's sim that can stand alongside the awesome *Longbow 2* as one of the most realistic flight sims available. Newbies to the genre might find it a bit overwhelming, but it's worth persevering with.  
**PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



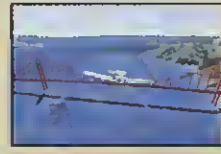
**FLYING CORPS COLD** **PCZ #59 • 92%**  
 ✪ Action-packed WWI flight simulation with neat graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WWI flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WWI sim currently available.  
**PUBLISHER** Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



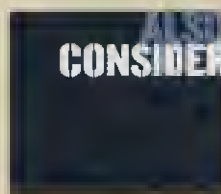
**A-10 CUBA!** **PCZ #59 • 90%**  
 ✪ Functional graphics for a game that really does capture the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Although it's slightly limited due to a lack of a fully-fledged campaign it's still great fun, as well as being pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.  
**PUBLISHER** Activision • 01895 4567000



**JANE'S WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS** **PCZ #72 • 90%**  
 ✪ It's been a fierce dogfight to see who rules the WWII flight sim skies. *Jane's* combines realism with accessibility and ease, and although the game doesn't have a dynamic campaign feature its graphics make it a clear winner.  
**PUBLISHER** Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



**FLIGHT UNLIMITED II** **PCZ #60 • 84%**  
 ✪ It can't really compete with the behemoth that is *Flight Sim 98*, and as a result is somewhat limited and claustrophobic. However, it does score highly for being more detailed in its smaller area, and much more fun.  
**PUBLISHER** Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



✪ If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – hence our recommendation for *Jetfighter III*. Some of the more recent releases worth considering include...  
**AIR WARRIOR III** Interactive Magic • PCZ #62 • 80%  
**F-16 AGGRESSOR** Virgin • PCZ #70 • 92%  
**COMANCHE GOLD** NovaLogic • PCZ #65 • 87%  
**F/A-1B KOREA** Empire Interactive • PCZ #61 • 90%

# ON THE CD

This month we've pulled out all the stops to bring you *Half-Life* levels, plus *Drakan* and *Shadow Company* demos

★ WORDS Mark Hill DISKMEISTER Daniel Emery

## HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

**CD-ROM HELP** Phone ABT on 01708 250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email [pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk](mailto:pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk). Please do NOT phone the PC ZONE office. Thanks.

**BEFORE YOU DIAL...** If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

- If possible, have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM etc – plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

## MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- You need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.



## DEMOS + SHAREWARE



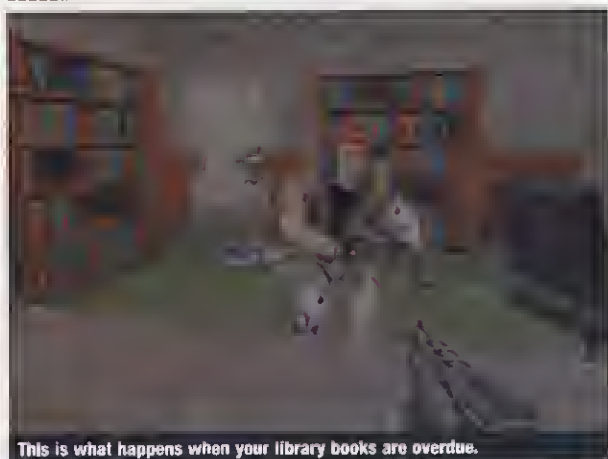
Er, I think you'll find that blood is yours.

Something tells me they were waiting for me.

# HALF-LIFE

## MISSION FEST

Sierra



This is what happens when your library books are overdue.

All those who complained that the *Team Fortress Classic* patch had no bots are in for a real treat. Here are 21 single-player levels that will bring a new lease of life to your favourite game, each one created by *Half-Life* fanatics from all over the world. For most of them, just copy the .bsp files to your Valve\Maps folder and type "map (name of level)" in the console. To bring down the console, you need to run the game with "hl.exe -console". Unzip and enjoy.

Controls: You know what they are



On today's Black Mesa menu: Gordon Freedman burgers.



# DRAKAN

Sierra

If you're not used to it, moving about with a monstrous animal between your legs can be quite difficult, but take your time and you'll soon be spouting fire among the clouds. Alternatively, you could always play this brilliant demo. *Drakan* is a fantasy action game, with more than a touch of adventuring, where you can ride a dragon or run around on foot. We wouldn't recommend the latter until you've found some hand weapons though. And you won't be going anywhere at all unless you've got a 3D card.

**Controls:** Keyboard/mouse/gamepad  
**ARROWS** Forward/back, strafe left/right  
**CTRL** Descend/crouch  
**T** Ascend/jump  
**LEFT SHIFT** Sneak  
**LEFT MOUSE** Primary attack  
**A** Secondary attack  
**END** Inventory  
**/** Call/mount dragon  
**ENTER** Activate/use  
**[/]** Next/previous weapon  
**Q** Quicksave  
**L** Quickload



Impressive wing span, but the halitosis is lethal.



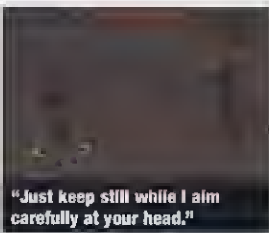
This weight-obsessed girl gets on the scales every day.

# SHADOW COMPANY

Interactive Magic



You won't last two minutes unless you plan things carefully.



Just keep still while I aim carefully at your head.



Ahh, a cosy camp fire.

*Shadow Company* has greater strategic depth than your average real-time strategy game, with the advantage of being 3D. The camera is the best we've seen in a long time and is a joy to use.

The mission contained in this demo requires stealth, cunning and forward planning in order to succeed. Creep up behind the first guard and slit his throat (don't shoot him – the sound of gunfire would raise the alarm), then you can take his weapons and use them to arm your team.

3D card required.

**Controls:** Mouse/keyboard  
**TAB** Show objectives  
**S** Stand  
**C** Crouch  
**P** Lie down  
**O** Overwatch mode  
**SPACE** Inventory  
**R** Reload  
**Z** Use binoculars  
**I** Show weapon range





## SHOCK FORCE I-Magic

Another online-only game, this time with a futuristic slant. Get in your vehicle, join a team and destroy the enemy for control of a planet. Teamwork and

tactical thinking are essential if you're going to be successful, but remember that the other team will be doing exactly the same thing. Go to the readme file for full control details.

**Controls:** Mouse/keyboard

W Forwards

S Backwards

A Slide left

D Slide right

**Mouse** Tilt/turn

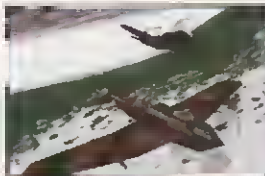
Q Raise hovering altitude

Z Lower altitude

**NUMPAD +/-** Increase/decrease speed

**SPACE** Fire autocannon

1 Fire pulse shell



## CONFIRMED KILL Eidos Interactive

*Confirmed Kill* is a hard-core flight sim on the Internet, with a wide range of missions. You can adjust the level of difficulty to make sure you don't fly against any experts your first time round. Remember that you'll need a 3D card and that it's an online-only demo.

**Controls:** Keyboard/joystick

F1-F8 Change views

,/ Rudder left/right

1-9 Throttle

E Start engine



## HELL-COPTER UbiSoft

More helicopter arcade shooting, this time from a more classic perspective and reminiscent of *Jungle Assault*. For those of you old enough to remember, the gameplay is like a 3D scrolling *Silkworm*, complete with exploding tanks and enemy choppers, plus ammo and health to collect along the way.

**Controls:** Keyboard/gamepad

**ARROWS** Forward/back/left/right

A Up

Z Down

**CTRL** Machine-gun

**SPACE** Cannon

R Next target

L Landing

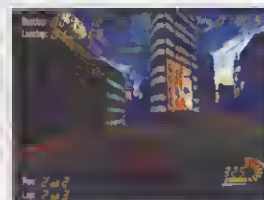


## BRAVEHEART Eidos Interactive

Your chance to emulate the Oscar-winning Mel Gibson is here. *Braveheart* is a strategic game of considerable depth and a true sense of history – or at least a Hollywood sense of history, which is completely different. Send out spies to enemy camps, burn down farms and try out your best Aussie-Scottish accent. 3Dfx card required. Read our review on page 86.

**Controls:** Mouse

F1-F5 Camera views



## THRUST TWIST 'N TURN

**Take 2 Interactive**  
*Thrust Twist 'N Turn* is a futuristic racing game with more than a little skill required.

As the title suggests, the tracks are anything but straight and conventional, and the space between you and the abyss is always dangerously small. Watch out for a review in next month's issue (on sale Thursday 29 July). 3D card required.

**Controls:** Keyboard/gamepad

**ARROWS** Accelerate/brake

Steer left/right

**SHIFT** Faster turn

1-5 Camera views

R Restore vehicle to track



## PEACEMAKER Jinxster

Don't be scared away by the fact that *Peacemaker* is a helicopter sim, straightforward arcade blasting is the order of the day. The game is set roughly 20 years into the future and has you fighting global terrorism with the very latest technology. Be careful though, those pesky terrorists have also got their hands on all those futuristic weapons and will blow you out of the sky.

**Controls:** Joystick/keyboard /mouse

**NUM KEYS** Move chopper

**MOUSE** Rotate/fire

+ Increase height

- Decrease height



## OFFICIAL FORMULA 1 RACING

**Eidos Interactive**

Some people are fascinated by Formula One and will watch what is basically glorified Scalextric to the sound of irritating commentary for hours. Fortunately, Formula One games are much more exciting, and this is not only the official one, it's also one of the best. Mixing simulation and arcade, it's an addictive racing experience, so do yourself a favour and try it out.

**Controls:** Keyboard/gamepad

**ARROWS** Accelerate/brake,

steer left/right

**NUMPAD** Pit stop request

# NEED FOR SPEED: ROAD CHALLENGE

**Electronic Arts**

The *NFS* series needs no introduction, being one of the most popular driving games ever. This isn't *Need For Speed IV*, but it still represents a significant improvement. Detailed graphics don't get in the way of a truly exhilarating racing rush, but don't stop to admire the quaint European village the race is set in or you'll be getting lapped in no time. Anyway, this should satiate you until the next instalment zooms in.

**Controls:** Keyboard/gamepad

A Shift up

Z Shift down

B Look behind

C Change camera view



Well, wouldn't you show off if you had a car like that?



There are four camera views to choose from.



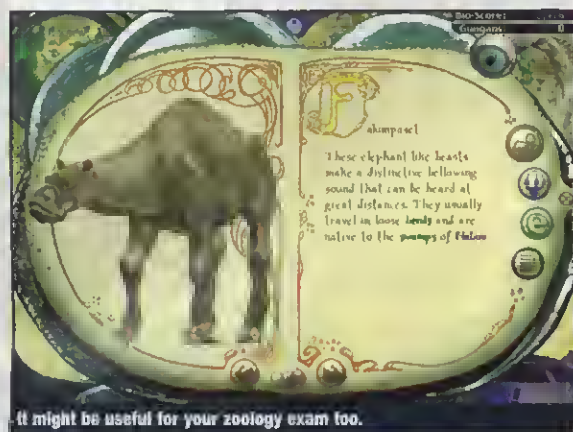


## STAR WARS: EPISODE I - GUNGAN FRONTIER

Hasbro Interactive

Essentially a kid's educational game, your mission in *Gungan Frontier* is to colonise new worlds and make them habitable for the Gungans while learning all about ecologically sound environments and the food chain in the process. The *Star Wars* franchise is in the process of being milked to death - judge for yourself whether this is worth pouring over your gaming cereal.

Controls: Mouse



## ON THE CD EXTENDED PLAY

Get more out of the games you already own (see Extended Play on page 137)

### TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC MAPS

If you've had enough of the TFC maps you already have, or you just want to try something different, we've included 15 new ones. Check out the ratings in Extended Play and take a look for yourself before plunging into an online session.

### HALF-LIFE MODELS

Let's face it, Gordon Freedman, with his Buddy Holly glasses and ginger goatee, isn't the most

impressive figure you'd ever hope to be. Try out some of these other models instead and wow all your friends (and a few strangers too).

### WARBIRDS SOUND FILES

*Warbirds* is an amazingly popular online flight sim. If you're as picky as most flight sim fans seem to be, you're very likely to want your planes to sound just right. Well, here are all the sounds you could ever want.

## ON THE CD PATCHES

Don't miss out on all the new patches that have been released. See our CD browser for explanations of what they do

### BRIAN LARA CRICKET

CENTPEDE DIRECT3D PATCH

CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER v1.1

EXPENDABLE

HALF-LIFE v1.0.1.0.1.0

LANDS OF LORE III v1.07A

MACHINES v1.1

NEED FOR SPEED III

NHL 99

REQUIEM v1.1

SIN v1.05

SPORTS CAR GT v1.551

TANK RACER v1.01

TRIPLE PLAY 2000

ULTIMATE RACE PRO v1.5

UNREAL v224

WARZONE 2100 v1.03b

X-WING ALLIANCE v2.01

## ON THE CD EDITORIAL

We couldn't fit this stuff anywhere else, so we've put it here

**Tips and Solutions** PC ZONE's massive hints and cheats database continues to grow.  
**Championship Manager 3 Update (unofficial)** Update your copy of CM3 to include all the latest wheels and deals in the football world.

**Hot Shots** A shocking trailer for what will no doubt be one of the games of the year, *System Shock 2*, plus a fast-paced trailer of *Unreal Tournament* which is bound to have you gagging for the real thing.

## ON THE CD ADDED EXTRAS

Check out this month's selection of tools and utilities

### DirectX 6.1

Microsoft's latest drivers for most Windows 95/98 games.

### EZDe21sk 1.8

Saves the position of your Windows 95/98 desktop shortcuts and folders.

### FileView v2.1

Hex/ASCII viewer for binary files.

### Hypersnap-DX Pro v3.2D.00

Screen-capture utility that can cope with DirectX/Direct3D and 3Dfx modes.

### ClaraNET

Sign up files for ClaraNET. Requires IE4.

### Winzip 7.0

The ultimate zip utility for Windows.

### Ameol v2.50

Brand new software for the excellent online service that is CIX.

### SciTech Display Doctor v6.53

The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

### Kali95 1.63

Latest version of the client software for playing games over the Internet.

### CompuServe 2.6a

Try this free for a month and get flying on the Net.

### TimeOnline v1.10e

Simple and effective way to track your Net time.

### GetRight 3.3.3

Salvage broken downloads. New version.

### ICQ 99a beta Build #1700

Client software for the best online chat service in the world.

### GameSpy 2.0B

Find all the latest servers playing your favourite games.

### AOLpress

Website building utility that's simple to use and very powerful.

### Voodoo drivers

Make sure all the latest games work with your 3Dfx card.

### QuickTime 3

The standard in digital video.

### Windows Media Player

Play the Web's coolest audio and video.

### MPlayer

Excellent free online gaming software.

### Decode Shell Extension v 4.1

Decode email attachments by right-clicking on a saved message file.

### Wireplay Client

The software that connects you to Wireplay, plus *Air Attack*, *Legal Crime* and *Towers Of Fallow* to play with.

### NavEx 2.0.1

Converts Navigator Bookmarks into Internet Explorer Favourites and vice versa.

### PowerBUN 1.07

Dial-Up Networking extender for Windows 95 and NT4.

### NearSite build 556

Download a whole website and browse it locally.

### Roger Wilco

A virtual walkie-talkie app that runs alongside your favourite multiplayer online games.

# putting you on the map



## simcity 3000

Excitement is building for 'SimCity 3000', the addictive new game to expand the mind and capture the imagination. Packed with new elements including famous landmark buildings, full 3D rendering, rival cities and surround sound, this is a game of extraordinary depth.



**MEGASTORES**



# EXTENDED PLAY



Some of the more popular *Team Fortress Classic* maps, new engine and weapon sounds for *Warbirds*, and some astonishingly good new skins for *Half-Life*

✶ WORDS Phil Ward

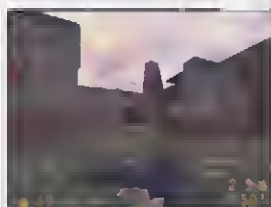
## TRY IT YOURSELF

**ON THE CD** On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 132.

## TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC

### ✶ New maps for the team-based blastfest

**ON THE CD** Get more out of Valve's spiffy *Team Fortress Classic* add-on with some top new levels. A good number of Internet games are running these maps, and having them on your hard drive means you won't have to waste time downloading them from the server. Just for the record, we've noticed that *TFC* now outnumbers *Half-Life* sessions. There are more than 3000 team players online at any given moment – more than the population of the Falkland Islands. If you've read our recent articles on getting online, you've got no excuse not to join them.



### ✶ 2 BARRERS (2barr2.zip)

Players: 4-16 (8 recommended)

Map size: Medium

A U-shaped map, with the bases lying opposite each other. Most of the fighting occurs in the semi-circular ravine that connects the two teams. Each base has more than one entrance, so occupants need to be on their toes. There's a sniper's nest, but it's so brightly lit that it's pretty useless. Large gates form a novel entry point, and the gate mechanism makes a good vantage point.

**PCZ VERDICT** 60%



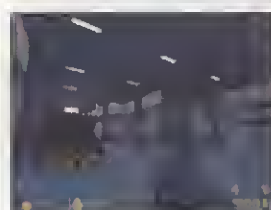
### ✶ TWO BASES (2base.zip)

Players: 12-24 (16 recommended)

Map size: Medium/Large

Based on the 2 Fortresses map, this centres around two bases that face each other and are separated by a bridged strip of land. You can jump into the river and swim through channels into the enemy base. Defence is quite easy, as one sentry underwater in the tunnel can repel almost all attacks, and the main lobby area has an arch under which everyone entering the base must pass. Sadly, no team scoring.

**PCZ VERDICT** 80%



## EXTENDED PLAY BOOKMARKS

**OFFICIAL TFC SITE** [www.teamfortressclassic.com](http://www.teamfortressclassic.com)

**SILD X MAP ARCHIVE** <http://half-life.net/sxmaps>

**PLANETFORTRESS** [www.planetfortress.com](http://www.planetfortress.com)

**OFFICIAL WARBIRDS SITE** [www.imagicgames.com/mol/warbirds](http://www.imagicgames.com/mol/warbirds)

**WARBIRDS.ORG** [www.warbirds.org](http://www.warbirds.org)

**OFFICIAL HALF-LIFE SITE** [www.sierrastudios.com/games/half-life](http://www.sierrastudios.com/games/half-life)

**SCARECROW HL MODELS** <http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/scarecrow>

### ✶ 2 MORE FORTRESSES

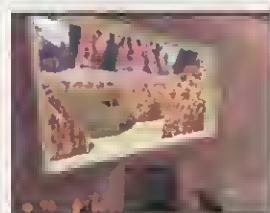
(2morfort.zip)

Players: 8-20 (16 recommended)

Map size: Medium

A fantastic level in the style – but not a copy of – the original 2Fort. Unlike most of the other *TFC* levels out there, the flag room is easily accessible; there's no hopping onto elevators, legging it down winding staircases or diving deep into subterranean chambers. While that may sound like a bad idea, it means your team tends to concentrate more on defence. Like The Well, it has a long sniper balcony and a water tunnel as a secondary base entrance. Recommended.

**PCZ VERDICT** 90%



### ✶ BUNKER ASSAULT

(bassault12.zip)

Players: 8-16 (16 recommended)

Map size: Medium

Borrowing the desert terrain from Hunted, this is a reasonable map that breaks away from the somewhat standardised design of most *TFC* levels. Importantly, there are now several, varied ways of getting to the flag, with some only accessible to certain player classes. This unfortunately means that much of the time is taken up with defence: it's all too easy for enemy players to zip through to the flag and notch up their score. The bunker from

which the map takes its name is a fairly redundant structure in the central area.

**PCZ VERDICT** 60%



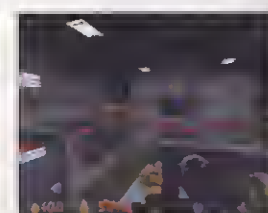
### ✶ BIG GUNS (biggun12.zip)

Players: 4-12 (12 recommended)

Map size: Small

A novel idea, where teams have to stoke up a monster plasma cannon (situated on top of your base) and then finally let it rip at the enemy. The plasma itself kills everyone inside the opposite building – team-mates included. The layout is reminiscent of 2Fort, and there's only one way into each base. Grab plasma cells from your opponent's cannon room and then dash back to insert them into yours. Once all cells are present, hit the red button and vaporise everyone in the other base. Recommended.

**PCZ VERDICT** 95%



### ✶ CANYON (canyon.zip)

Players: 8-16 (12 recommended)

Map size: Medium

Two bases are separated by a

## WARBIRDS

### ✶ Pump up the volume for realistic new aircraft sounds

No left wing? We can get another one. Stuck flaps? A few squirts of WD40. Imminent confrontation with ground? Ah...

**ON THE CD** Last year's online flight sim of the year, *Warbirds*, has thousands of wannabe pilots dotted all over the globe. Enhance your experience in the game with new engine, weaponry and mechanical sounds, many of which have been recorded from the cockpits of historic aircraft.

### ✶ PLANES PART 1 (planes1.zip)

Includes the Bt109 E, F, G, G6 & K, BF110 C & G, B17 F & G, B25 C, H & J, F4U4, Fw190 A-8 & D, G4M Betty, Hurricanes Marks I & IIc, Ju87D, Ju88, ME262, Mosquito models FBVI & BIV, P39D and P40B. Also included are two default sounds for the radial engine and a rocket sound.

### ✶ PLANES PART 2 (planes2.zip)

Includes Supermarine Spitfire Marks I, V, IX & XIV, Seafire II, A6M, and guns for the P38 Series.

### ✶ PLANES PART 3 (planes3.zip)

Includes P51 D (Merlin engine, sounds gorgeous) & C, Yaks 3 & 9, and the P40E.

### ✶ HIT SOUNDS (hit.zip)

Some cool ratta-tat-splat noises to add real feeling to the kill.



huge wall of rock. There are three ways around this obstacle: a tiny tunnel at its base, a cable car ride, and a ladder. The architecture on the inside of each base is really rather fetching, and two or three unique routes to the flag room mean you need to be pretty choosy with your sentry guns. The only trouble we found was that it can be too high-scoring unless the majority of teams hang back in defence.

**PCZVEROICT** **70%**



**➤ CIRCLE JERK V2** (cj2.zip)  
Players: 8-24 (24 recommended)  
Map size: Medium/Large  
A refreshing change to the 'norm', Circle Jerk separates the reds from the blues by making one defensive-only and one offensive – a bit like in Hunted. The blue team must nab the flag and return it to their base, and the red team must stop them doing it. This one turns up quite a bit on Internet servers, so it's worthwhile unzipping it to your hard drive even if you're not a big fan.

**PCZVEROICT** **85%**



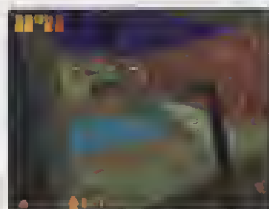
**➤ CONFRONTATIONS** (con1.zip)  
Players: 8-32 (24 recommended)  
Map size: Large  
A well-designed 2Fort variant, confrontations will be instantly familiar to any regular Team Fortress Classic player. Sniper gallery, river, bridge, water entrances, ramp room, spiral staircase and so on. The difference comes in the architecture and textures, and in the way the flag room is accessible through a switched door. There's also a grate in the ceiling through which enemy players can toss grenades. Recommended – although given the size of the map, it's unlikely your LAN will accommodate it, so you need to find an Internet server instead.

**PCZVEROICT** **80%**



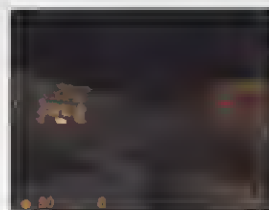
**➤ DARKNESS** (darkness.zip)  
Players: 16-32 (32 recommended)  
Map size: Large  
Beautifully designed and lit, this is a 2Fort variant. Unlike its Valve counterpart, however, each base has a unique architecture and feel – the red base feels very industrial and almost post-apocalyptic; the blue base is more like the work of HR 'Alien' Giger. The flag actually lies on a second level, a bit like in The Well, and can require a moderate amount of navigation to reach. Rocket jumpers will have it easy.

**PCZVEROICT** **80%**



**➤ MR FLIBBLE'S BASES** (flib10hl.zip)  
Players: 4-24 (16 recommended)  
Map size: Medium/Large  
A conversion of an old Quake Team Fortress map, on the face of it this is a bit dull and functional. But with perseverance it proves to be a great map, demanding a mixture of strategies and a variety of player classes. The entrance to each base flicks right and left like The Well, and it's a great area for engineers and sentry guns. The sniper balcony is rather novel, and open to Demomen with their MIRV grenades. Recommended – for those of you bored with 2Fort.

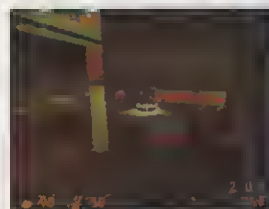
**PCZVEROICT** **90%**



**➤ FORTSAKEN** (fortsake.zip)  
Players: 12-20 (20 recommended)  
Map size: Medium/Large  
Someone's taken a bit of time with this one. Elegant structures, perfect lighting and great gameplay. For example: on the way to the enemy base (which curves majestically around the

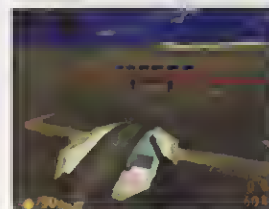
central arena), you have to cross a vat of water – but someone on the other side can hit a button to drain it, leaving you looking like a drowned rat at the bottom. There are other ways in, including a rocket jumper's route via the sniper balcony. Recommended.

**PCZVEROICT** **90%**



**➤ THE PIPE ZONE** (pipezone.zip)  
Players: 10-32 (16 recommended)  
Map size: Medium/Large  
A refreshing change, and possibly the pick of the bunch, Pipe Zone is a retake of Valve's Canalzone. It's all about controlling areas of the map, and the object is to capture all the levels' command points. Unlike Canalzone, you're given an added boost when you control four or more points: 15 points and a short burst of quad damage. It's very dark and mysterious, so you have to be on your toes. Snipers will love it. Recommended.

**PCZVEROICT** **95%**



**➤ THE HOOD** (tf\_hood.zip)  
Players: 17-25 (25 recommended)  
Map size: Large  
A weird mix of 2Fort and Hunted, this comprises three teams: blue and red duking it out and trying to capture each other's flag; the yellow team are snipers and score for individual frags. The architecture's a bit bland and the texturing unaligned, but gameplay is a breath of fresh air. If you can find an Internet server running 20 people or more, give it a go.

**PCZVEROICT** **75%**



**➤ TFC BORDER** (tfcborder2a.zip)  
Players: 17-25 (25 recommended)  
Map size: Large

Last but not least, a truly silly map – but one that's monster fun at the same time. The premise is that immigrants (the blue team) are trying to cross the border between the US and Mexico, and Men in Black (well, okay then, red team players) receive points for getting them across. Border Patrol (the yellow team) are

having none of this, and try to annihilate all and sundry. The really enjoyable thing about it is that the Immigrants have to get across in a big truck which you get to drive like the train in Half-Life Subtransit. Recommended – for a laugh.

**PCZVEROICT** **80%**

## HALF-LIFE

**➤ New player models for Half-Life. And by gum, they're pretty damn good**

Bored with the rather humdrum range of skins available to you with standard Half-Life? Then here are a few new models to keep you happy. Simply unzip the files into separate directories beneath your Half-Life\valve\models\player folder – you can then select them from the Customise menu within the game. Nearly all the models listed below are the work of professional model maker and all-round nice chap Wayne Peters – remember to pay homage at his website, listed in the bookmarks section.



**➤ AEON FLUX** (aeonflux.zip)

A bit thin and blokeish for my liking, but your opponents are guaranteed to stop and stare at your crotch – giving you ample chance to clump them on the head with your crowbar.

➤ Available from [half-life.net/sxmaps/models.html](http://half-life.net/sxmaps/models.html)



**➤ KNUTE AND BOLTE** (k\_and\_b.zip)

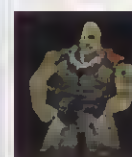
The vast majority of new skins are utterly dire, but once in a while you come across one that looks as though it came from Valve themselves. This one's the pick of the crop.



**➤ MANDALORIAN** (mandalorian.zip)

Boba Fett, the infamous bounty hunter from Star Wars, now makes an appearance in Half-Life. No, we couldn't find Darth Vader, but we did look.

➤ Available from [dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/scarecrow](http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/scarecrow)



**➤ QUAKE 2 MARINE** (q2marine.zip)

Those of you hankering after the beefy soldier from Quake II need look no further. Here's a pretty accurate conversion for Half-Life (although all models in HL are taller than those in QII).

➤ Available from [dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/scarecrow](http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/scarecrow)



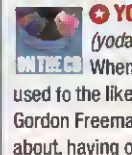
**➤ SPAWN** (spawn.zip)

Another fabulous skin from Wayne Peters,

designer of Knute and Bolte.

This one's based on the comic book and film hero Spawn.

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**➤ YODAN** (yodan.zip)

When you're used to the likes of Gordon Freeman shuffling about, having one of these buggers thundering towards you along a dark corridor is enough to make you wet yourself.





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# THE WORLD ACCOMPLISHING



## LIONHEAD STUDIOS

Two of the most recognisable names in the industry, Peter Molyneux and Steve Jackson, spare some time to talk to *Paul Presley*. Are things really black and white in Guildford?

PHOTOGRAPHY Mike Harding

**D**escribing some of the gadgets from last year's E3 show – VR helmets, mercury-filled freestanding joysticks, motion-sensor inputs on PlayStation fighting games – Peter Molyneux's love of innovation is evident (even if the innovations he describes have long since disappeared). You feel like pulling out one of those Sunday newspaper gadget supplements and dangling it over his head to see if you can make the ex-Bullfroger dance.

Steve Jackson, on the other hand, is more laid back about it all. He seems to have the outlook of a games *player* rather than a designer. While Molyneux talks of gadgets, Jackson enthuses about his performance on a VR baseball game. The impression is of a real partnership – Molyneux coming up with the ideas, and Jackson telling him if they would actually work.

Between them, Jackson and Molyneux have created Lionhead Studios, a gathering of some of the finest game designers in the country, and who for the past two years have been working on *Black & White*,

Molyneux's most ambitious-sounding game since *Populous*. *Black & White* was recently shown to an appreciative crowd of journalists at the London HQ of BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts), a body that Molyneux was recently invited to join as they expand their interest in the world of games.

How did your involvement with BAFTA come about?

Molyneux: Well, amazingly they phoned me and asked if I would come and see them. I thought it



TO...



## We all keep saying everyone's doing clones, but the truth is that there are a load of gaming genres that are yet to be discovered

**PETER MOLYNEUX, LIONHEAD STUDIOS**

would just be a simple "What's all this about the games industry? Oh, right. Thanks very much. Now go." Instead it was very, very cool. What they've decided to do is to make BAFTA not just about film and television, but to also include the interactive industry as well. There will be a time when we go along to an awards ceremony and see games up there alongside film and television.

**It won't be any time soon though.**

**Molyneux:** I don't know. They're very, very keen on it, and you can see the same sort of thing happening over in the States. There's this gradual movement in the games industry, despite what we're doing, to go very mass-market. Some people will say the trouble with that is that we'll see the 'dumbing down' of games, but eventually we'll see games challenging film and television for mass market acceptance.

**Jackson:** It depends on the industry itself, on how well we receive the BAFTA thing. It seems to be going very well. A bit slow, perhaps, but there is

more and more interest in it. The more prestige there is to it, the more companies will come and support it.

**Molyneux:** Also, imagine having a game that wins an Oscar or a BAFTA. It would be pretty cool.

**How does someone else get involved with them?**

**Molyneux:** BAFTA have said that anyone involved in the games industry can join them as members, which is even cooler. It doesn't cost very much, and anyone who's not joining them, frankly, is mad. It gives you such access to talent from the film and television world that we can use in the future. If machines such as the PlayStation 2 are as good as

they're boasting, we're going to have to start using that talent – screenwriters, post production facilities, all of that.

**Jackson:** Plus you get to go to film premieres.

**Molyneux:** It's amazing to think that just ten years ago, if you told anyone you programmed computer games for a living they'd say: "Thank you very much, now go away." It wasn't a pulling line at a party. It is now, partially because we're getting acceptance from places like BAFTA. It's amazing.

This is the upside of our industry though. What about the recent backlash due to the extreme levels of violence in many games?





← **Molyneux:** One of the reasons that so many games are violent these days is because violence is perhaps the easiest kind of game to market. There's a ready-built audience there that enjoys all that. What takes far more skill is to create a game that *doesn't* have violence, or only has it in small parts in context with the story.

**Jackson:** Violence always hits the headlines, especially at the moment, and games are always being blamed for the faults in society when in truth they're no more to blame than any other form of media.

**Molyneux:** It's like when silent movies were around. Most were slapstick in nature, and when talkies arrived everyone said: "It won't work, how do you do slapstick in talkies?" But the fact was that with talkies came an unfathomable well of content that Hollywood hadn't even begun to access. That's what the games industry is like. There's this amazing number of concepts, emotions and designs that really hasn't been touched. We all keep saying everyone's doing clones, but the truth is that there are a load of gaming genres that are yet to be discovered.

## GAMES FOR GROWN-UPS

On face value, *Black & White* doesn't look like one of these 'new genre' titles. While being shown the game, I was struck by how much it reminded me of *Populous* in places (much to Molyneux's chagrin). The basic concept of the game is to take a small village and subtly influence its people towards prosperity, while being rewarded with their worship. It isn't until the creatures in the game are demonstrated that the uniqueness of the title starts to shine through. Games such as the two *Creatures* titles, those annoying Tamagotchi things (Molyneux's love of gadgets once again seems evident) and the old 8-bit number *Little Computer People* tried to bring the 'nurturing' side of the gamesplayer to the fore. But it's difficult to remember a game that actually let you stroke, tickle and slap your pet. *Lula: The Sexy Empire*, perhaps.

Does the influence of organisations like BAFTA mean that game designers will have to start designing games that are considered more 'worthy' for the emerging adult audience?

**Jackson:** Adults want a little bit more than just flash graphics. Nobody's denying that everyone likes games to look good, it makes things more playable. But adults also want enough depth in a game to feel they're being challenged intellectually. **Molyneux:** Without that challenge being too obscure. It has to feel like it's something you've conquered. Too many games are too obscure for their own good.

**Jackson:** Adventure games are classics for that. There was one I remember called *The Golden Rod*,

**“He's a very, very smart guy... I have more respect for him than for almost anyone in the industry”**

PETER MOLYNEUX ON OEMIS HASSABIS

and one of the puzzles required you to blow your nose with the golden handkerchief to open a door. That's just ridiculous.

**Molyneux:** Who's ever going to get that?

**Jackson:** When I first started playing adventure games, I realised that after having written all those *Fighting Fantasy* books, I knew how these things were created; I knew how easy it was to make something so difficult that a player would be tearing their hair out and spending hours on it. They might get there in the end, but not without cheating. It's very frustrating to design around that.

Before joining the world of 'proper' games, Jackson was one of the two brains (along with Eidos head

honcho Ian Livingstone) behind the successful range of *Fighting Fantasy* game books. *FF* books were like single-player games of *Dungeons & Dragons*; you'd create a character, roll dice, and play out an adventure by choosing different options to follow as the story unfolded. They were extremely popular during the mid to late '80s.

Do you miss the *Fighting Fantasy* days?

**Jackson:** Sure. At the time it just came out of the blue and became huge. It seemed like every day we'd be getting a call from Penguin saying: "Germany has just taken off. We want you to go on a publicity tour," and so on. I think we sold something like 40 million books in ten years. Pretty good going.

Are they still selling today?

**Jackson:** I think so. A few countries, like Germany, France and Japan, still sell them. There are also the old iron curtain countries as well. They're doing really well in Hungary – apparently there's a high intellectual population.

**Molyneux:** Maybe this is the answer to the Kosovo situation: send a load of *Fighting Fantasy* books over there to keep them all occupied.

Could you see yourself writing another one?

**Jackson:** Well, there are only so many things you can do once you've gone down into a dungeon. I mean, there are about 70 of them already.

That's interesting. Ian Livingstone gave me the same answer when I once asked him that.

**Molyneux:** I think you should do a soft porn version.

**Jackson:** Somebody actually did one – not porn – aimed at girls. Our editor at Penguin had decided that *FF* was all for boys, so why shouldn't she do one for girls. She wrote them herself, a load of romantic Mills & Boon-style *Fighting Fantasy* books. It just didn't work at all.





This is the Lionhead crew, the dedicated team beaver away night and day to bring us the company's very first game, *Black & White*.



These guys work so hard they have to drink their coffee with split-second precision.

It seems that girls just don't play games.

**Jackson:** I think it's something to do with the male psyche that likes to be constantly challenged with puzzles. Girls are not the least bit interested in all that, they just want to get on with reading the story.

This is perhaps the most important question of the day. A few months ago I asked Demis Hassabis if Elixir Studios could take Lionhead in a fight. He said that they could. How do you respond to that?

**Molyneux:** (Pauses) Undoubtedly they could. Especially with me, because I'm an absolute coward, and I'll run away from any fighting situation. Of course, if we were going to be challenged to a fight we'd have to be allowed to bring guns, and that really nullifies everything.

You don't have anybody capable in a fist fight?

**Molyneux:** We have Mark Healey [senior artist and kung fu man], but I wouldn't really want to put him up against anybody. He's more into transcendental meditation.

**Jackson:** He could 'peace' people to death.

**Molyneux:** We're not really into fights.

**Jackson:** Andy Robson's our hard man. He could take anybody. We'll send him in. He's from our testing department and runs our football team, Lionfoot. He used to play for Arsenal reserves. That's what we should do, set up a developers' football league.

**Molyneux:** No, better idea. Remember that Geoff Capes Superstars thing? We should have the Game Developers' Superstars challenge. I can't imagine anything more pathetic than a load of us running around a field, pulling tractors in our string vests.

You'd probably have to scale down the challenges a bit - 'Lift up that heavy box', and the like.

**Jackson:** Maybe not the 'heavy' bit. 'Lift up that mouse pad', perhaps.

**Molyneux:** Perhaps make it more techie: 'This PC is not working. You have 15 seconds to get it running.'

**Jackson:** We used to have something like that at the games conventions in America. There was a big one called Origin that had The America's Cup, a British/American challenge. Very silly. Not like lifting buses with our teeth or anything, but the egg-throwing was a good one.

**Molyneux:** I think I'd enjoy throwing eggs at Americans.

#### TAKEN FOR A RIDE

Time for a more serious issue. Following the Demis Hassabis Interview (PCZ #76), two different issues arose, both regarding *Theme Park* (PCZ #17, 93%). The first, debated on a well-known Teletext games page, concerned Chris Sawyer's recent *Rollercoaster Tycoon* (PCZ #75, 87%) and how similar both games seemed to be. The second, and subject to much discussion by a leading UK online community, concerned Hassabis's actual role on the original project. Who better to ask about both subjects than Molyneux?

Okay, *Rollercoaster Tycoon*: what were your initial thoughts about it?

**Molyneux:** Well, it was obviously inspired by *Theme Park*, despite what he [Sawyer] said. I'm amazed, truly amazed, that it took so long for someone else to come out with another game like it. *Theme Park* took two years to make and was a complete departure for Bullfrog, and it's done incredibly well. Unbelievably well. It's still in the charts now. It only has to survive for two more months for it to have been in the charts for five years. It's an incredible feat. And it's taken the rest of the industry that long to realise that maybe theme parks would be a cool thing to do a game about. Chris has obviously been inspired by *Theme Park* and has updated it. And I think it looks pretty good, actually.

It's more than just vague similarities though...



Peter Molyneux and Steve Jackson take a quick breather to discuss whose barber does the best job.

**Molyneux:** It's pretty similar in certain parts, but to be fair to him, when you're doing a game about designing a theme park it's hard to avoid certain similarities. I think he's implemented a lot of it really well.

You don't feel as though he's just ripping off your idea?

**Molyneux:** No, God no. I'm pretty fine with it, actually. I find anything like that hugely flattering. It'll be interesting to see what Bullfrog do with *Theme Park 2*.

Would you have liked to do that yourself?

**Molyneux:** Yes - very, very much. I had some clear ideas in my head as to what the original should have looked like, and every game that I've ever done, with the exception of *Black & White*, has always ended up completely different to the way I pictured it.

What was Demis Hassabis's role in the original *Theme Park*?

**Molyneux:** Demis joined Bullfrog in the last eight months of *Theme Park*'s development, and did a brilliant job on the engine and helped to sculpt the game. He's a very, very smart guy, and I said to him, this kid: "If you want to give programming the simulation AI a go, try it out. If it works, great; if it doesn't, no problem." He took it away and got it right first time. And I felt that was so incredible, and had such an impact on the shape of the final game, that he deserved a co-creator credit. I have more respect for him than for almost anyone in the industry.

So there you have it, straight from the horse/lion's mouth. So no more letters, please. There's no doubting that *Black & White* will be a huge game once it arrives, and just for once we'll actually get a game that looks the same as the design in Molyneux's head. A scary thought indeed. ☑



# SICKNOTES



Like the winter snow, the summer sunshine or the wide-eyed innocence of a newborn child, nothing lasts forever. And so it is with Sick Notes. Still, it's only water in a stranger's tear...

★ SIGNING OFF CHARLIE BROOKER

## FAN MAIL

With regard to your 'fight' with Mr Hayes-Kossmann in issue #77, I'd like to point out that both of you are sad, pathetic bastards.

Brooker, you are obviously under the illusion that your letters page is the most hilarious piece of literature since the script for the last series of *The Fast Show* (or whatever drivel you find amusing), and that you are something of a cartoonist and gaming 'vigilante'. Firstly, your cartoons all look exactly the same. It's like you have three figures which you can draw: a bloke, a bird and a dog. They all look pretty much the same as the bloke, and none of them are well-drawn in any case.

You, my friend, are a failed cartoonist at best. Why don't you create a truly hilarious cartoon series, which might stand some chance of success? For example, you could write a series about a bitter, pig-faced little shit who thinks he's really cool, funny and clever because he regularly insults and offends people via his pathetic letters page in a (otherwise decent) magazine. At the end of every episode, you could have him scurrying home to have a wank over his *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* desktop theme, eat a mayonnaise sandwich, and have a damn good cry at what a truly pitiful existence he lives.

Hayes-Kossmann? What kind of name is that? More like Tossmann, if you ask me. You are a man so pathetic you have to attempt to rile Brooker. You spineless little [expletive deleted]. You taunt Brooker safe in the knowledge that he's such a weedy little squirt of piss that the very idea of having a real fight is bound to make him run and hide. Do you think it's clever to write in to a mag

and start making wild accusations about someone? Of course he's not going to go and fight people, you simpering twat, he writes for an entertainment magazine.

I very much doubt that you really – as you claim – "have a life" other than the most base sense of existence. Why

**"In reality, I'm a quiet, bookish type who spends his time listening to Radio Four and doing the weeding"**

waste your time writing a letter to a gaming magazine if you have *anything* better to do? Why get so worked up over a few stupid letters? Git.

To both of you: obviously neither of you would have any chance of even being involved in, let alone winning, a real fight. The best you can do is write about a fight you would be neither physically nor mentally capable of in the real world. God forbid either of you should actually throw a punch. The puncher would probably break his hand on the receiver's limp, sagging body, while the receiver would crumple to a ball, mewling softly and seeping blood because his fragile, vitamin E-deficient skin is so easily broken by even the hint of anything hitting it.

You are both beneath contempt. I wouldn't sully my fists on either of you laughable excuses for men. But if you feel up to a damn good simultaneous kicking, let me know and we'll sort something out.

Fester

Don't you think it's all a bit pointless? Sitting there behind your PC, typing endless strings of asterisks in a feeble attempt to insult your readers – the people who pay your wages. Don't think we can't fight back. You

are a terminally mean person, and must be dealt with. I recommend a strict regime of being around 'normal' people for at least, say, an hour; people who have friends and, yes, a *life*. You'd never last more than five seconds away from your machine. You'd be just a

quivering wreck, pining for artificial murder on *Kingpin*. Or am I wrong, Mr 'Shouty'?

Nick Russell

I'd just like to congratulate you on writing the worst column on the face of the earth. Reading your mindless replies to sad letters makes me want to blow your fat little head off.

J Freedman

You limp-fisted, moronic twat.

J Thompson

Go f\*\*k a lawnmower.

Nizstar

★ You know what? You're all absolutely bang on (which is why there's no *Loser Of The Month* this issue). This is, as Nick Russell points out, all a bit pointless. Fortunately, Sick Notes as a whole is hardly representative of my true character. It's all a facade. Enough of this faux thuggishness; in reality I'm a quiet, bookish type who spends his time listening to Radio Four and doing the weeding.

Which is one of the reasons why this is the last time Sick Notes appears in its current form. Since its inception,

this whole sorry exercise has become increasingly pointless with each passing month, the majority of letters consisting of witless ramblings and illiterate threats. Almost everyone who's written in apparently does so to reveal themselves as a dunce, with the exception of 'Fester', who sent the only truly stinging letter this page has ever received (he also went much further in his original message, which we've had to cut slightly here to avoid legal action). So congratulations to him. The bastard.

Next month we unveil Love Notes, in which you

are invited to post us descriptions of your happiest gaming moments, 'don't kids say the darnedest things' stories, and photographs of family pets. Instead of pulling a scary face in the byline photo, I'll be pictured dressed as a clown, cheering up the patients in the children's ward of a local hospital by modelling balloon animals and slashing my forearm open with a jagged piece of tin.

Actually, forget the last bit of that sentence. In fact, forget the entire Love Notes concept. Next month on this page: something totally different. At last.





# NUTS

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